

# SEMINARE

## SEMINARE

### Tomy wydane Published Volumes

- 1 – 1975
- 2 – 1977
- 3 – 1978
- 4 – 1979
- 5 – 1981
- 6 – 1983
- 7 – 1985
- 8 – 1986
- 9 – 1987/1988
- 10 – 1994
- 11 – 1995
- 12 – 1996
- 13 – 1997
- 14 – 1998
- 15 – 1999
- 16 – 2000
- 17 – 2001
- 18 – 2002
- 19 – 2003
- 20 – 2004
- 21 – 2005
- 22 – 2005 (jubileuszowy/jubilee vol.)
- 23 – 2006
- 24 – 2007
- 25 – 2008
- 26 – 2009
- 27 – 2010
- 28 – 2010
- 29 – 2011
- 30 – 2011
- 31 – 2012
- 32 – 2012
- 33 – 2013
- 34 – 2013
- 35 – 2014
- 36 – 2015
- 37 – 2016
- 38 – 2017
- 39 – 2018
- 40 – 2019
- 41 – 2020
- 42 – 2021
- 43 – 2022 (1) (2) (3)

# SEMINARE

LEARNED INVESTIGATIONS

QUARTERLY

Volume 43 No. 4

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.21852/sem.2022.4>

FRANCIS DE SALES LEARNED SOCIETY  
KRAKÓW-PIŁA-WARSZAWA-WROCŁAW  
2022

**Editor's office address**

SEMINARE

P.O. Box 26; 05-092 ŁOMIANKI; POLAND Tel. +48 22 7327393; Fax +48 22 7327399

E-mail: [seminare@seminare.pl](mailto:seminare@seminare.pl); [www.seminare.pl](http://www.seminare.pl)

**Publisher**

Francis de Sales Learned Society

03-775 Warszawa, ul. Kawęczyńska 53; Tel. +48 22 518 62 00; Fax +48 22 518 62 02

E-mail: [tnfs@tnfs.pl](mailto:tnfs@tnfs.pl); [www.tnfs.pl](http://www.tnfs.pl)

**Cover design**

Sławomir Krajewski

**Computer editing**

Marcin Izdebski

**Editing**

Joanna Wójcik, PhD

**Statistical correction**

Bartłomiej Skowroński, PhD

**Proofreading of texts in English**

Teresa Wójcik, PhD

Ewa Sawicka, PhD

**Proofreading of texts in German**

Peter Gross

Barbara Skoczyńska-Prokopowicz, PhD

**Proofreading of texts in Italian**

Cristina Monacchia, PhD

Print edition is the original version of the periodical

© Copyright by TNFS, Warszawa 2022

ISSN 1232-8766

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.21852/sem>

*Publication co-financed by the Ministry of Education and Science under the  
"Development of Scientific Journals" program (contract no. RCN/SN/0688/2021/1).*

**Printed by**

Elpil, Siedlce

## Editorial Staff

Mariusz Chamarczuk (redaktor naczelny), Stanisław Chrobak, Giuseppina Del Core, Jerzy Gocko (zastępca redaktora naczelnego), Cristina Monacchia, Roman Mazur, Peter Mlynarčík, Krzysztof Niegowski (sekretarz), Ryszard F. Sadowski (zastępca redaktora naczelnego), Dariusz Sztek (sekretarz), Mirosław Wierzbicki (sekretarz), Daniel Urbančok

## Advisory Board

Harry Aponte PhD, Drexel University (Philadelphia, PA, USA); prof. dr hab. Beáta Balogová, Prešovská Univerzita v Prešove (Słowacja); prof. Dietrich Benner, Humboldt Universität (Berlin, Niemcy); prof. dr hab. Tadeusz Biesaga, Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II (Kraków, Polska); prof. Jan Borowiec, Uppsala Universitet (Szwecja); prof. Alfio Marcello Buscemi OFM, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum (Jerusalem, Israel); dr Marek T. Chmielewski (Moguncja, Niemcy); prof. Ihor Dobrianski, Kirovohrad Institute of Regional Economy and Business Administration (Ukraina); prof. Paolo Gambini, Università Pontificia Salesiana (Rzym, Włochy); dr hab. Kazimierz Gryżenia, Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie (Polska); prof. Sheamus Hegarty, International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (Amsterdam, Holandia); prof. Galyna Katolyk, Ukrainian Catholic University (Lwów, Ukraina); prof. dr hab. Helmut Juros, Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie (Polska); prof. dr hab. Kazimierz Łatak, Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie (Polska); dr hab. prof. UPJPII Janusz Mączka, Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II (Kraków, Polska); prof. dr hab. Kazimierz Misiaszek, Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie (Polska); dr hab. prof. UKSW Jan Niewęglowski, Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie (Polska); prof. Fritz Oser, Universität Freiburg (Üechtland, Szwajcaria); prof. dr Stefan Oster (Passawa, Niemcy); prof. Malcolm Payne, Manchester Metropolitan University (Wielka Brytania); Anna Pecoraro PhD, University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, PA USA); prof. Zhengmei Peng, East China Normal University (Shanghai, Chiny); prof. Sue Ralph, University Northampton (Wielka Brytania); prof. dr hab. Henryk Skorowski, Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie (Polska); dr hab. Josef Spindelböck, Internationalen Theologischen Institut (Trumau, Austria); dr hab. prof. AIK Bogdan Stańkowski, Akademia Ignatianum (Kraków, Polska); prof. dr hab. Henryk Stawniak, Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie (Polska); prof. dr hab. Bogdan Szczepankowski, Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna w Łodzi (Polska); prof. Ewa Teodorowicz-Hellman, Stockholm University (Szwecja); prof. dr hab. Stanisław Wilk, Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II, Lublin (Polska); Teresa Wójcik PhD, Villanova University (PA USA); dr hab. Iwona Zymomyra, Kirovohrad State Pedagogical University (Ukraina); prof. Mykoła Zymomyra, Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University (Ukraina); prof. dr hab. Jan Żaryn, Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie, IPN (Polska)

## Reviewing Editors

Bartosz Adamczewski (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Rastislav Adamko (Catholic University in Ružomberok, Słowacja); Roger Coffi Anoumou (University of Abomey, Benin); Francis-Vincent Anthony (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Ditta Baczała (Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu); Jakub Bartoszewski (Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa w Kolinie); Tadeusz Bąk (Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Techniczno-Ekonomiczna w Jarosławiu); Józef Binnebesel, (Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu); Tadeusz Borutka (Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II w Krakowie); Joseph F. Chorpenning (St. Joseph University, Filadelfia, Stany Zjednoczone); Frantisek Citbaj (University of Presov, Słowacja); Giuseppe Cursio (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Mirosława Cyłkowska-Nowak (Uniwersytet Medyczny im. K. Marcinkowskiego w Poznaniu); Barbara Czarnecka (University of Bedfordshire, Wielka Brytania / Polish University Abroad in London, Wielka Brytania); Pavol Dancák (University of Presov, Słowacja); Andrzej Derdziuk (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); John Dickson (Royal Holloway University, London, Wielka Brytania); Henryk Drawnel (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); Kazimierz Dullak (Uniwersytet Szczeciński); Ginter Dzierżon (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Anna Fidelus (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Michael Daniel Findikyan (St. Nersess Armenian Seminary in New Rochelle, Stany Zjednoczone); Zbigniew Formella (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Konrad Glombik (Uniwersytet Opolski); Anna A. Głusiuk (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Piotr Gołdyn (Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu); Richard Gorban (Ivano-Frankivsk Theological Academy of Greek-Catholic Church, Ukraina); Marian Graczyk (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Czesław Grajewski (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Dariusz Grządziel (Sale-

sian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Dmitro Hertsjuk (Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukraina); Suzanne Hollman (Divine Mercy University, Stany Zjednoczone); Stanisław Jankowski (Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu); Kazimiera Jaworska (Papieski Wydział Teologiczny we Wrocławiu); Marcin Jurczyk (Uniwersytet Śląski w Katowicach); Varghese Kalluvachel (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Przemysław E. Kaniok (Uniwersytet Opolski); Marta Khymko (Lviv Regional Institute of Postgraduate Pedagogical Education, Ukraina); Piotr Kieniewicz (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); Zdzisława Kobylińska (Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski w Olsztynie); Andrzej Kobyliński (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Elena Kocai (Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Litwa); Tadeusz Kołosowski (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Jerzy Koperek (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); Michał Kosche (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); Stanisław Kość (Catholic University in Ružomberok, Słowacja); Ryszard Kozłowski (Akademia Pomorska w Słupsku); Czesław Krakowiak (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); Franciszek Krasoń (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Jeremi T. Królikowski (Szkoła Główna Gospodarstwa Wiejskiego w Warszawie); Ewa Kubiak (Uniwersytet Łódzki); Grzegorz Kudlak (Uniwersytet Warszawski); Agnieszka Kulik (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); Jostrom Isaac Kureethadam (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Mariusz Kuźniar (Charles University in Prague, Czechy); Jacek Kwiatkowski (Uniwersytet Warszawski); Tadeusz Lewicki (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Rafał Łatka (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej w Warszawie); Zbigniew Łepko (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Marcin T. Łukaszewski (Uniwersytet Muzyczny Fryderyka Chopina w Warszawie); Józef Mandziuk (Politechnika Rzeszowska); Alfredo Manhiça (Pontifical University Antonianum, Rome, Włochy); Lidia Marek (Uniwersytet Szczeciński); Mario Maritano (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Lidia Marszałek (Akademia Mazowiecka w Płocku); Paweł Mazanka (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Marek Melnyk (Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski w Olsztynie); Monika Menke (Palacký University Olomouc, Czechy); Włodzimierz Mier-Jędrzejowicz (Polish University Abroad in London, Wielka Brytania); Zbigniew Mikołajczyk (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Leszek Misiarczyk (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Peter Mlynarčík (Institute of St. Thomas Aquinas in Žilina, Słowacja); Piotr Morciniec (Uniwersytet Opolski); Jarosław Moskałyk (Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu); Irina Myszczyzyn (Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukraina); Józef Naumowicz (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Damián Němec (Palacký University Olomouc, Czechy); Jacek Nowak (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Marian Nowak (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); Janusz Nowiński (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Sławomir Nowosad (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); Krystyna Ostrowska (Uniwersytet Warszawski); Krzysztof Owczarek (St. Thomas Theological Institute in Messina, Włochy); Zbigniew Pańpuch (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); Anna Pecoraro (University of Pennsylvania, Stany Zjednoczone); Stanisław Piekarski (Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego w Warszawie); Jan Pietrzykowski (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Jan Piskurewicz (Instytut Historii Nauki PAN | Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Gregorio Poblano Bata (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Greg Prater (Arizona State University, Stany Zjednoczone); Jan Przybyłowski (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Alessandro Ricci (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Maria Ryś (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Tadeusz Sarnowski (Uniwersytet Warszawski); Svitlana Shchudlo (Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University, Ukraina); Renata Sikora (Wyższa Szkoła Finansów i Zarządzania, Warszawa); Michał Sławewski (Uniwersytet Muzyczny Fryderyka Chopina w Warszawie); Krzysztof Smykowski (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); Adam Solak (Akademia Pedagogiki Specjalnej im. Marii Grzegorzewskiej w Warszawie); Michele Sorice (Free International University for Social Studies „Guido Carli” in Rome, Włochy); Michał Stachurski (Uniwersytet Opole); Józef Stala (Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II w Krakowie); Witold Starnawski (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Mária Suriková (Institute for Sociology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Słowacja); Agnieszka Szajner (badacz niezależny, Wielka Brytania); Beata Szluz (Uniwersytet Rzeszowski); Adam Swieżyński (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Lucjan Świto (Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski w Olsztynie); Gaston Gabriel Tata (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Wiesław Theiss (Akademia Pedagogiki Specjalnej im. Marii Grzegorzewskiej w Warszawie); Scaria Thuruthiyil (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Andrzej Toczyski (Studium Theologicum Salesianum in Jerusalem, Izrael); Siergiej Trojan (Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine | Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Ukraina); Giampaolo Usai (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Jarosław Wąsowicz (badacz niezależny, Polska); Mirosław Wierzbicki (Kujawsko-Pomorska Szkoła Wyższa w Bydgoszczy); Piotr Wiśniewski (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); Józef Wroczeński (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Władysław Wyżowadzki (Polish University Abroad in London, Wielka Brytania); Dominik Zamiatala (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Sławomir Zaręba (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Andrzej Żądło (Uniwersytet Śląski w Katowicach)

# SEMINARE

POSZUKIWANIA NAUKOWE

KWARTALNIK

**Tom 43 nr 4**

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.21852/sem.2022.4>

**TOWARZYSTWO NAUKOWE FRANCISZKA SALEZEGO  
KRAKÓW-PIŁA-WARSZAWA-WROCŁAW**

**2022**

**Adres Redakcji „Seminare”**

05-092 Łomianki, skr. poczt. 26, tel. (22) 732 73 97, fax (22) 732 73 99  
e-mail: [seminare@seminare.pl](mailto:seminare@seminare.pl); [www.seminare.pl](http://www.seminare.pl)

**Adres Wydawcy**

Towarzystwo Naukowe Franciszka Salezego  
03-775 Warszawa, ul. Kawęczynska 53, tel. (22) 518 62 00, fax (22) 518 62 02

**Projekt okładki**

Sławomir Krajewski

**Opracowanie komputerowe**

Marcin Izdebski

**Korekta edytorska**

dr Joanna Wójcik

**Korekta statystyczna**

dr Bartłomiej Skowroński

**Korekta tekstów w języku angielskim**

Teresa Wójcik PhD  
dr Ewa Sawicka

**Korekta tekstów w języku niemieckim**

Peter Gross

dr Barbara Skoczyńska-Prokopowicz

**Korekta tekstów w języku włoskim**

Cristina Monacchia

Wersja papierowa czasopisma jest wersją pierwotną

© Copyright by TNFS, Warszawa 2022

ISSN 1232-8766

**Druk i oprawa**

Elpil, Siedlce



## Redaguje Zespół

Mariusz Chamarczuk (redaktor naczelny), Stanisław Chrobak, Giuseppina Del Core, Jerzy Gocko (zastępca redaktora naczelnego), Cristina Monacchia, Roman Mazur, Peter Mlynarčík, Krzysztof Niegowski (sekretarz), Ryszard F. Sadowski (zastępca redaktora naczelnego), Dariusz Sztuk (sekretarz), Mirosław Wierzbicki (sekretarz), Daniel Urbančok

## Rada Naukowa

Harry Aponte PhD, Drexel University (Philadelphia, PA, USA); prof. dr hab. Beáta Balogová, Prešovská Univerzita v Prešove (Słowacja); prof. Dietrich Benner, Humboldt Universität (Berlin, Niemcy); prof. dr hab. Tadeusz Biesaga, Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II (Kraków, Polska); prof. Jan Borowiec, Uppsala Universitet (Szwecja); prof. Alfio Marcello Buscemi OFM, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum (Jerusalem, Israel); dr Marek T. Chmielewski (Moguncja, Niemcy); prof. Ihor Dobrianski, Kirovohrad Institute of Regional Economy and Business Administration (Ukraina); prof. Paolo Gambini, Università Pontificia Salesiana (Rzym, Włochy); dr hab. Kazimierz Gryżenia, Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie (Polska); prof. Sheamus Hegarty, International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (Amsterdam, Holandia); prof. Galyna Katolyk, Ukrainian Catholic University (Lwów, Ukraina); prof. dr hab. Helmut Juros, Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie (Polska); prof. dr hab. Kazimierz Łatak, Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie (Polska); dr hab. prof. UPJPII Janusz Mączka, Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II (Kraków, Polska); prof. dr hab. Kazimierz Misiaszek, Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie (Polska); dr hab. prof. UKSW Jan Niewęglowski, Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie (Polska); prof. Fritz Oser, Universität Freiburg (Üechtland, Szwajcaria); prof. dr Stefan Oster (Passawa, Niemcy); prof. Malcolm Payne, Manchester Metropolitan University (Wielka Brytania); Anna Pecoraro PhD, University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, PA USA); prof. Zhengmei Peng, East China Normal University (Shanghai, Chiny); prof. Sue Ralph, University Northampton (Wielka Brytania); prof. dr hab. Henryk Skorowski, Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie (Polska); dr hab. Josef Spindelböck, Internationalen Theologischen Institut (Trumau, Austria); dr hab. prof. AIK Bogdan Stańkowski, Akademia Ignatianum (Kraków, Polska); prof. dr hab. Henryk Stawniak, Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie (Polska); prof. dr hab. Bogdan Szczepankowski, Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna w Łodzi (Polska); prof. Ewa Teodorowicz-Hellman, Stockholm University (Szwecja); prof. dr hab. Stanisław Wilk, Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II, Lublin (Polska); Teresa Wójcik PhD, Villanova University (PA USA); dr hab. Ivan Zymomyra, Kirovohrad State Pedagogical University (Ukraina); prof. Mykoła Zymomyra, Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University (Ukraina); prof. dr hab. Jan Żaryn, Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie, IPN (Polska)

## Zespół recenzentów

Bartosz Adamczewski (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Rastislav Adamko (Catholic University in Ružomberok, Słowacja); Roger Coffi Anoumou (University of Abomey, Benin); Francis-Vincent Anthony (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Ditta Baczała (Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu); Jakub Bartoszewski (Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa w Koninie); Tadeusz Bąk (Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Techniczno-Ekonomiczna w Jarosławiu); Józef Binnebesel, (Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu); Tadeusz Borutka (Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II w Krakowie); Joseph F. Chorpenning (St. Joseph University, Filadelfia, Stany Zjednoczone); Frantisek Citbaj (University of Presov, Słowacja); Giuseppe Cursio (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Mirosława Cyłkowska-Nowak (Uniwersytet Medyczny im. K. Marcinkowskiego w Poznaniu); Barbara Czarnecka (University of Bedfordshire, Wielka Brytania / Polish University Abroad in London, Wielka Brytania); Pavol Dancák (University of Presov, Słowacja); Andrzej Derdziuk (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); John Dickson (Royal Holloway University, London, Wielka Brytania); Henryk Drawnel (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); Kazimierz Dullak (Uniwersytet Szczeciński); Ginter Dzierżon (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Anna Fidelus (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Michael Daniel Findikyan (St. Nersess Armenian Seminary in New Rochelle, Stany Zjednoczone); Zbigniew Formella (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Konrad Glombik (Uniwersytet Opolski); Anna A. Głusiuk (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Piotr Gołdyn (Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu); Richard Gorban (Ivano-Frankivsk Theological Academy of Greek-Catholic Church, Ukraina); Marian Graczyk (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Czesław Grajewski (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Dariusz Grządziel (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Dmitro Hertsiuk (Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukraina); Suzanne Hollman (Divine Mercy University, Stany Zjednoczone); Stanisław Jankowski (Uniwersytet Mikołaja Kopernika w To-

runiu); Kazimiera Jaworska (Papieski Wydział Teologiczny we Wrocławiu); Marcin Jurczyk (Uniwersytet Śląski w Katowicach); Varghese Kalluvachel (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Przemysław E. Kaniok (Uniwersytet Opolski); Marta Khymko (Lviv Regional Institute of Postgraduate Pedagogical Education, Ukraina); Piotr Kieniewicz (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); Zdzisława Kobylińska (Uniwersytet Wermińsko-Mazurski w Olsztynie); Andrzej Kobyliński (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Elena Kocai (Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Litwa); Tadeusz Kołosowski (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Jerzy Koperek (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); Michał Kosche (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); Stanisław Kość (Catholic University in Ružomberok, Słowacja); Ryszard Kozłowski (Akademia Pomorska w Słupsku); Czesław Krakowiak (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); Franciszek Krasoń (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Jeremi T. Królikowski (Szkoła Główna Gospodarstwa Wiejskiego w Warszawie); Ewa Kubiak (Uniwersytet Łódzki); Grzegorz Kudlak (Uniwersytet Warszawski); Agnieszka Kulik (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); Jostrom Isaac Kureethadam (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Mariusz Kuźniar (Charles University in Prague, Czechy); Jacek Kwiatkowski (Uniwersytet Warszawski); Tadeusz Lewicki (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Rafał Łatka (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej w Warszawie); Zbigniew Lępko (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Marcin T. Łukaszewski (Uniwersytet Muzyczny Fryderyka Chopina w Warszawie); Józef Mandziuk (Politechnika Rzeszowska); Alfredo Manhiça (Pontifical University Antonianum, Rome, Włochy); Lidia Marek (Uniwersytet Szczeciński); Mario Maritano (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Lidia Marszałek (Akademia Mazowiecka w Płocku); Paweł Mazanka (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Marek Melnyk (Uniwersytet Wermińsko-Mazurski w Olsztynie); Monika Menke (Palacký University Olomouc, Czechy); Włodzimierz Mier-Jędrzejowicz (Polish University Abroad in London, Wielka Brytania); Zbigniew Mikołajczyk (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Leszek Misiarczyk (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Peter Mlynarčík (Institute of St. Thomas Aquinas in Žilina, Słowacja); Piotr Morciniec (Uniwersytet Opolski); Jarosław Moskałyk (Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu); Irina Myszczyszyn (Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukraina); Józef Naumowicz (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Damián Némec (Palacký University Olomouc, Czechy); Jacek Nowak (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Marian Nowak (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); Janusz Nowiński (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Sławomir Nowosad (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); Krystyna Ostrowska (Uniwersytet Warszawski); Krzysztof Owczarek (St. Thomas Theological Institute in Messina, Włochy); Zbigniew Pańpuch (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); Anna Pecoraro (University of Pennsylvania, Stany Zjednoczone); Stanisław Piekarski (Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego w Warszawie); Jan Pietrzykowski (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Jan Piskurewicz (Instytut Historii Nauki PAN | Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Gregorio Poblano Bata (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Greg Prater (Arizona State University, Stany Zjednoczone); Jan Przybyłowski (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Alessandro Ricci (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Maria Ryś (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Tadeusz Sarnowski (Uniwersytet Warszawski); Svitlana Shchudlo (Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University, Ukraina); Renata Sikora (Wyższa Szkoła Finansów i Zarządzania, Warszawa); Michał Sławecki (Uniwersytet Muzyczny Fryderyka Chopina w Warszawie); Krzysztof Smykowski (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); Adam Solak (Akademia Pedagogiki Specjalnej im. Marii Grzegorzewskiej w Warszawie); Michele Sorice (Free International University for Social Studies „Guido Carli” in Rome, Włochy); Michał Stachurski (Uniwersytet Opole); Józef Stala (Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II w Krakowie); Witold Starnawski (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Mária Suríková (Institute for Sociology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Słowacja); Agnieszka Szajner (badacz niezależny, Wielka Brytania); Beata Szluz (Uniwersytet Rzeszowski); Adam Świeżyński (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Lucjan Świto (Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski w Olsztynie); Gaston Gabriel Tata (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Wiesław Theiss (Akademia Pedagogiki Specjalnej im. Marii Grzegorzewskiej w Warszawie); Scaria Thuruthiyil (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Andrzej Toczyski (Studium Theologicum Salesianum in Jerusalem, Izrael); Siergiej Trojan (Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine | Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Ukraina); Giampaolo Usai (Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Włochy); Jarosław Wąsowicz (badacz niezależny, Polska); Mirosław Wierzbicki (Kujawsko-Pomorska Szkoła Wyższa w Bydgoszczy); Piotr Wiśniewski (Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski Jana Pawła II); Józef Wroceński (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Władysław Wyszowadzki (Polish University Abroad in London, Wielka Brytania); Dominik Zamiatąła (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Sławomir Zareba (Uniwersytet Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie); Andrzej Żądło (Uniwersytet Śląski w Katowicach)

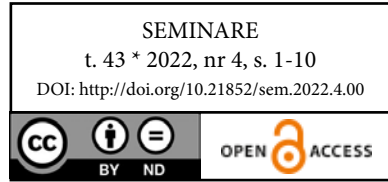


Saint Francis de Sales (1567–1622)

The 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Death of the Patron  
of the Francis de Sales Scientific Society

[Painting by Janusz Szpyt, Chapel of the Salesian House in Łomianki]





JERZY GOCKO SDB

John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6513-5681>\* Jerzy@Gocko.pl

Received: 10 Dec 2022; Reviewed: 20 Dec 2022; Accepted: 30 Dec 2022

SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES (1567–1622):  
BISHOP OF GENEVA, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH, HUMANIST.  
ON THE 400<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF THE PATRON  
OF THE FRANCIS DE SALES SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY

Abstract

The 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Saint Francis de Sales is an opportunity to evoke in “Seminare. Learned Investigations” his figure, academic and ascetic heritage and to pay tribute to the patron of Francis de Sales Scientific Society. This very author of “Introduction to the Devout Life” and “Treatise on the Love of God,” enamored with God and man, became the inspiration for initiatives of the scientific Society that was established 15 years ago in the Salesian milieu. Acknowledged by both secular historiography and Catholic hagiography as a *humanist theologian*, de Sales delineates the humanistic and personalistic profile of the research conducted within the framework of the Francis de Sales Scientific Society. The paper depicts de Sales as the Bishop of Geneva, Doctor of the Church, and patron of the Francis de Sales Scientific Society. The second part of the paper discusses the origin and the activities of the Society in its 15 years of existence.

**Keywords:** Francis de Sales, Francis de Sales Scientific Society

ŚWIĘTY FRANCISZEK SALEZY (1567–1622):  
BISKUP GENEWY – DOKTOR KOŚCIOŁA – HUMANISTA.  
W 400-LECIE ŚMIERCI PATRONA TOWARZYSTWA NAUKOWEGO FRANCISZKA SALEZEGO

Abstrakt

400-lecie śmierci św. Franciszka Salezego jest okazją do przywołania na łamach „Seminare. Poszukiwania naukowe” jego postaci oraz naukowego i ascetycznego dziedzictwa biskupa Genewy oraz by oddać cześć patronowi Towarzystwa Naukowego Franciszka Salezego. To właśnie autor *Filotei* i *Teotyma*, zakochany w Bogu i w człowieku, stał się inspiracją inicjatyw założonego przed 15 laty w kręgu salezjańskim towarzystwa naukowego. Uznany zarówno przez historiografię świecką, jak i hagiografię katolicką za *teologa humanistę* wyznacza humanistyczny i personalistyczny profil prowadzonym w ramach towarzystwa naukowego badaniom. Tekst pokazuje Salezego jako

biskupa Genewy, doktora Kościoła oraz patrona Towarzystwa Naukowego Franciszka Salezego. W drugiej części artykułu dokonano syntetycznej retrospekcji na genezę i główne obszary działalności Towarzystwa w 15-lecie jego istnienia.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Franciszek Salezy, Towarzystwo Naukowe Franciszka Salezego

## INTRODUCTION

The 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Saint Francis de Sales is an excellent opportunity to evoke his figure on the pages of “Seminare” not only because it is always worthwhile to delve into the academic and ascetic heritage of the Bishop of Geneva but also to pay tribute to the patron of the Francis de Sales Scientific Society. This very author of “Introduction to the Devout Life” and “Treatise on the Love of God,” enamored with God and man, has been an inspiration for initiatives of the Society that was established 15 years ago in the Salesian milieu. Acknowledged by both secular historiography and Catholic hagiography, de Sales is known as a humanist theologian, theologian of humanism, or a true humanist (Zarzycki 2008, 9). Thus, he delineates the humanistic and personalistic profile of the research conducted within the framework of the Francis de Sales Scientific Society.

### 1. AN ARISTOCRAT AND BISHOP OF GENEVA

Francis de Sales was born on the 21<sup>st</sup> of August 1567 in Thorens, near the Huguenot capital. His birth was preceded by two significant events that – each in a different way – would play a significant role in his later life and activities: in 1563, the Council of Trent was solemnly concluded; a year later, John Calvin died in Geneva (Rybałt 2016, 17).

As a Savoyard, De Sales was a thoroughly Romance figure, who combined French and Italian traits. He was educated in line with his noble background, being the son of the Lord of Sales. From the age of six, he was taught by private tutors and in the local schools in La Roche and Annecy. In 1580, 13-year-old Francis was sent to the Jesuit Collège de Clermont in Paris, where he studied Latin, Greek, philosophy, and rhetoric. At the same time, he read theology at the Sorbonne. In 1592, he obtained a doctorate in *utroque iure* (both civil and canon law) from the University of Padua. Respecting his father’s wishes, he studied law while pursuing his interests in theology. This harmonious blend of both fields foreshadowed the later congruity of his religious and intellectual life (Nigg 1980, 178). While in Paris, he overcame a profound spiritual crisis stemming from a debated, heterodox doctrine on predestination among Parisian theologians. This, however, made him capable of deeply understanding souls tormented by spiritual struggle. The crisis may have led to Francis’ optimism, significant in his doctrine, based on trust in God-Love (Struś 1989, 459–460).

Having completed his studies, much to his father’s surprise, Francis chose the priesthood. He was ordained a priest on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December 1593. He volunteered to

recatholicize the inhabitants of Chablais, who had been Calvinists for two generations. The four-year mission ended with a partial success. Biographers of de Sales tend to call this stage of his missionary work heroic. By the order of Clement VIII, Francis went to Geneva, the then-center of Calvinism, where he unsuccessfully tried to convert John Calvin's successor, Theodore Beza (Rybalt 2016, 34–54).

Subsequently, de Sales's influence extended throughout northern Savoy. In 1599, he became coadjutor, and in 1602, the Bishop of Geneva. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 1602, he was appointed as a bishop. Six days later, he officially entered not the cathedral in Geneva (controlled by the Huguenots), but the parish church in Annecy where he had been baptized years ago. St Bernard of Clairvaux's saying "the measure of love is to love without measure" became his episcopal motto (Nigg 1980, 182; Rybalt 2016, 34–54). As the Bishop of Geneva, de Sales reformed religious life in the diocese in the spirit of the Council of Trent, reconvening diocesan synods and reforming old monasteries. In 1610, with Jane Frances de Chantal, he founded the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary, in Poland colloquially known as the Visitandines (Struś 1989, 460).

## 2. DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

The life of St Francis de Sales coincides with a turbulent period not only due to historical events and the history of Christianity. It was also a time when many various conceptions regarding the nature of man, man's perfection, and spirituality emerged. While Protestantism devalued the role of the individual in the pursuit of holiness, humanism, on the other hand, extolled humanity and our greatness. These were dialectical stances: Protestantism proclaimed the loss of our free will, and humanism acclaimed man as an absolute value. They both influenced de Sales' attitude: Christian humanism inspired by God's revelation. Francis rejected anthropocentrism while emphasizing the natural dignity of a man called to love God. Here, God is the One who draws us and encourages us to become His friends. Thus, sainthood is not a privilege of the chosen but an ideal for every Christian. (Struś, 1989, 460). In *Introduction to the Devout Life*, de Sales wrote:

When God created the world, He commanded each tree to bear fruit after its kind; and even so He bids Christians, the living trees of His Church, to bring forth fruits of devotion, each one according to his kind and vocation. A different exercise of devotion is required of each – the noble, the artisan, the servant, the prince, the maiden, and the wife; and furthermore such practice must be modified according to the strength, the calling, and the duties of each individual. [...] Everybody fulfills his special calling better when subject to the influence of devotion: family duties are lighter, married love truer, service to our King more faithful, every kind of occupation more acceptable and better performed where that is the guide. It is an error, nay more, a very heresy, to seek to banish the devout life from the soldier's guardroom, the mechanic's workshop, the prince's court, or the domestic hearth. Of course, a purely contemplative devotion, such as is especially proper to

the religious and monastic life, cannot be practiced in these outer vocations, but there are various other kinds of devotion well-suited to lead those whose calling is secular, along the paths of perfection. [...] Be sure that wheresoever our lot is cast we may and must aim at the perfect life (Part 1, Chapter 3).

It is important to remember that the medieval model of holiness (limited to the consecrated life or the clergy and linked to the doctrine of *contemptus mundi*) was still in force. Therefore, one did not look for perfection and holiness in the world. De Sales' Copernican revolution in religious life (which made him the precursor of lay theology) consisted in withdrawing devotion solely from monasteries and churches and showing that the ideal of perfection is available to all (Mierzwa 2004, 19). De Sales' great merit consisted in showing the individual character of vocation and, what followed, the individual path to perfection (Fournier 2004, 63-64). He conveyed essential features of secular holiness on the pages of *Introduction to the Devout Life* (a manual of spirituality addressed to the laity in particular) and in his letters, especially those written to lay people (of which over 2000 have been preserved). It is through this form of contact that de Sales primarily developed his spiritual guidance.

In the history of Christian spirituality, de Sales' concept of Christian perfection will later be called Salesian spirituality (which includes the spirituality of the congregations founded by St John Bosco). Its foundation is love (as the source and center of Christian life), inner peace and joy, gentleness, patience, and humility. It is a spirituality of realism that acknowledges human weakness and limitations, but also, perhaps most importantly, a spirituality of optimism with the central belief that we were created as *imago Dei* and that we are given as much grace as is indispensable to fulfill the commandment of love (Mierzwa 2004, 20-33).

The universal Church appreciated de Sales' teaching on the universal call to perfection and declared him Doctor of the Church on the 19<sup>th</sup> of July 1877. By doing this, Pius IX placed the Bishop of Geneva alongside great figures, who greatly contributed to the Church's treasury of wisdom. De Sales' biographers have called him the doctor of perfection and the doctor of love. Because of these traits, St John Bosco chose him as the patron of his multiple educational works thus treating de Sales as his guide in his spiritual life and the field of education: "I will be guided in all things by the love and goodness of St Francis de Sales" (Memorie 1898, I, 518). In Fr Bosco's preventive system, the gentleness and goodness of Francis took the original form of "familiarity," which integrated an educational community and bore fruit in the lives of the Oratory's students (Łuczyński 2018, 254).

### 3. A HUMANIST

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 1607, in one of his letters to Jane Francis de Chantal, Francis wrote, "I am, above all, a human being." St. Francis was a man of the Renaissance, more precisely, of Renaissance humanism. The main ideas of



humanism, reaching back to antiquity, were revived at the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. First, it happened in Italy and then in the European culture, contributing to the emergence of a new type of individual – the Renaissance man. This new spirit also swept through France, influencing various aspects of life, including religious life. According to Henri Bremond (Bremond 1916, 68), de Sales represents a form of what is called “devout humanism,” *l’humanisme dévot*, (distinguishing itself from pagan as well as Christian humanism), which embraces the most genuinely humanistic Christian perspective.

In the latest monograph dedicated to de Sales and his spirituality, published in Poland on the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death, Eugenio Alburquerque Frutos (2023, 13-14) thus characterizes the humanism of de Sales:

To St Francis de Sales, humanism was the way of living and being in the world with one’s neighbors and with God. This marked everything that Sales was, did, and wrote. His entire life remained imbued with this humanism, which encompasses the entire human being and incorporates his/her into the work of salvation. Francis de Sales is recognized as a profoundly human saint, always caring for others, sensitive to human weaknesses, and constantly ready to show considerateness and uplift others in spirit.

Historians of spirituality interpret *l’humanisme dévot* as a reaction to the spreading naturalistic humanism and those manifestations of Christian humanism that distorted the actual image of Christianity. “Devout humanism” differed from Christian humanism in that it did not emphasize intellectualism or theory, but rather focused on the practice of spiritual life and experience, appreciating human emotionality. The spiritual treatises characteristic of this trend delve into the topic of love for God, love for the homeland, marriage, friendship, loyalty, humility, and simplicity. They were primarily a school for personal holiness, a doctrine, undoubtedly a theology, but affective and entirely focused on practice. Significantly, they were not addressed only to the elite but aimed to contribute to the personal holiness of everyone (Zarzycki 2008, 14).

The key to understanding the humanism of the Doctor of Love is grasping the foundations of his life: deep faith that prompted him to grow constantly and to transcend himself, as well as his philosophy of humanism that emphasized the freedom and dignity of man. Solid education he obtained in Padua and Paris played a significant role as well. De Sales knew Italian, Latin, and, to some extent, Greek and Hebrew. He profoundly revered the Holy Scripture. He drew extensively from Aristotle, Plato, Epictetus, Homer, Cicero, Pliny the Elder, Seneca, and numerous Church Fathers, mainly Augustine, whom he most frequently referenced in his writings. His literary talent, linguistic style, and eloquence predisposed him to become a classic of French literature (Zarzycki 2008, 13–15). De Sales harmoniously combined all these sources and derived from them an optimistic vision of man and the world. In the “Treatise on the Love of God”, he expressed the essence of his vision:

Man is the perfection of the universe;  
 the spirit is the perfection of man;  
 love, that of the spirit;  
 and charity, that of love.  
 Wherefore the love of God is the end,  
 the perfection and the excellence of the universe (De Sales 2002, X 1 517).

#### 4. PATRON SAINT OF THE FRANCIS DE SALES SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY

Francis de Sales Scientific Society (TNFS) was established in 2008 by the initiative of the Salesians. It is a nationwide Society registered as an association, collaborating with national and international scientific centers. Its primary goal is scientific research and educational activities in the spirit of St. Francis de Sales, the patron saint of scholars and educators, as well as the integration of the scientific community comprising members and friends of the Salesian Society. In line with its statute, the Society conducts research, publishes its findings, and promotes knowledge, especially in the field of humanities. It organizes and supports symposia, scientific and academic conferences, public lectures, and exhibitions under its patronage. Also, it publishes its scientific journal “Seminare. Poszukiwania Naukowe” [Seminare. Learned Investigations] along with three scientific publishing series. Moreover, the Society grants awards for scientific achievements: the Society of Francis de Sales Award and the Fr. Prof. Adam Durak Award for works in the field of theology, and liturgical theology in particular. The statutory goals of the Society also include maintaining documentation and collecting bibliographies of scientific works by members of the Scientific Society, the Salesian Society and works about them. Also, the Society gathers and stores all kinds of scientific, library, archival, and museum materials primarily related to the activities of the Salesian Society.

At the end of 2022, the Society had 125 members. Over 15 years of activity, 189 members participated in its work. Honorary members of Francis de Sales Scientific Society include Rev. Dr. Pascual Chávez – Rector Major of the Salesian Society (2002–2014); Rev. Ángel Fernández Artime – Rector Major of the Salesian Society (2014–); and the late Bishop Dr. Adam Śmigielski, Bishop of Sosnowiec, who died on the 7th of October 2008. Supporting members include all four Polish Salesian Inspectorates as well as Salesian Theological Seminaries in Łódź and Kraków.

The most important annual event in the life of the Society is its Congress combined with the General Assembly of members and a scientific conference as part of the research series “Youth and Their World”. The main activities of the Society’s authorities include regular board meetings aimed at the current coordination of the Society’s work, preparation and approval of the budget, preparation for the General Assembly, and other tasks following the statute. Advisory representatives from the Audit Committee, the chief editor of the journal “Seminare”, and other individuals invited by the President take part in the Board meetings. The Board meets around 4 to 8 times a year.

A detailed list of past Congresses, their locations, dates, and the themes of scientific conferences are included in the table below.

Name	Date	Place	Theme of the TNFS Congress   academic conference	Important events
Founding Meeting The Francis de Sales Scientific Society (TNFS)	9 June 2007	Polana	Founding meeting of Francis de Sales Scientific Society (TNFS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Choosing the name and statute of TNFS</li> <li>- Adopting the founding resolution</li> <li>- Electing the founding committee</li> <li>- Electing the first-term authorities</li> </ul>
I TNFS Congress	6-7 June 2008	Kutno	The objectives and forms of activity of scientific societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Approving the Board's Regulation</li> <li>- Establishing the TNFS Award</li> </ul>
International Scientific Conference	23 Oct. 2008	UKSW, Warszawa	The educational system of St. John Bosco in the service of human rights	
II TNFS Congress	12-13 June 2009	Częstochowa	150 years of the Salesian Society	Zofia Langowska – the first laureate of the TNFS Award
III TNFS Congress	11-12 June 2010	Kutno	Youth in “democratic freedom” (I)	Rev. Prof. Roman Murawski SDB – laureate of the TNFS Award
IV TNFS Congress	13-14 May 2011	Kutno	Youth and their world: Youth in “democratic freedom” (II)	Międzynarodowy Festiwal im. Księdza Stanisława Ormińskiego SDB w Rumii [Rev. Stanisław Ormiński SDB International Festival in Rumia] – laureate of the TNFS Award
V TNFS Congress	5-6 Mar. 2012	Toruń	Youth and their world: Youth in “democratic freedom” (III)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Congress (part of XIX Economic Forum in Toruń)</li> <li>- Electing the second-term authorities</li> <li>- WSDTS in Łódź nad Wartą – laureate of the TNFS Award</li> </ul>
VI TNFS Congress	3-5 Mar. 2013	Aleksandrów Kujawski / Toruń	Youth and their world: Work axiology and pitfalls related to work	Scientific part of the Congress (part of XX Economic Forum in Toruń)
Congress of Salesians Engaged in Academic Work	4-5 Oct. 2013	Niepokalanów	The role of education in the Salesian Society   Academic achievements of Polish Salesians	
VII TNFS Congress	16-17 May 2014	WSDTS, Kraków	Youth and environmental challenges	
VIII TNFS Congress	15-16 May 2015	Gietrzwałd	The educational system of St. John Bosco on the 200 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth; current challenges	
IX TNFS Congress	13-14 May 2016	UKSW, Warszawa	Youth and their world: marriage and family	Electing the third-term authorities
X TNFS Congress	19-20 May 2017	WSDTS, Łódź nad Wartą	Youth and their world: youth and the church	Rev. Prof. Stanisław Wilk SDB – laureate of TNFS Award
XI TNFS Congress	18-19 May 2018	Stoczek Klasztorny	An adult in the world of youth: patriotic education of youth. The 100 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of Poland regaining independence	
XII TNFS Congress	9-10 May 2019	Białobrzegi	Youth and their world: youth and the European Union	
XIII TNFS Congress	14 May 2021	Online	Youth and their world: reflections on the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father Francis “Christus vivit”	
XIV TNFS Congress	19-20 May 2022	Ślesin koło Komina	Youth and their world: Youth and their post-pandemic world	Electing the fourth-term authorities
XV TNFS Congress	18-19 May 2023	Dom Polonii, Putusk	Youth and war: challenges in the context of the war in Ukraine	Rev. Prof. Henryk Skorowski SDB – laureate of TNFS Award

Publishing is an integral part of the Francis de Sales Scientific Society's activities. The publishing house's mission is to popularize research findings from various human studies and promote research ideas and concepts inspired by the humanism of Francis de Sales. The TNFS publishing house disseminates not only the research findings of its members and scientific conferences held under its auspices but also makes it possible to share and exchange achievements of Polish and international scientific milieus while fostering high work standards. For their publishing activities, the TNFS and the quarterly "Seminare. Poszukiwania naukowe" [Seminare. Learned Investigations] editorial team received Mały Feniks [Little Phoenix] award from Stowarzyszenie Wydawców Katolickich [Association of Catholic Publishers]. The award aims to promote and recognize valuable publications on Catholicism or those that positively show Christian values. The award was given during XXV Targi Wydawców Katolickich [the 25<sup>th</sup> Catholic Publishers Fair] in 2019.

The Society's journal "Seminare" has been available in print since 1975 (ISSN 1232-8766) and electronically (e-ISSN 2450-1328). The journal's profile and thematic scope encompass the broadly understood "world of youth" examined from the perspective of various scientific disciplines. It publishes works especially in pedagogy, education, psychology, sociology, family studies, law, philosophy, anthropology, theology, and the history of education. Moreover, "Seminare" aims to create a broad platform for exchanging ideas and experiences about the "world of youth" and contemporary debates about humanity.

Moreover, the Society publishes academic and scientific monographs in three series:

- Studies and Dissertations
- Biblica et Theologica TNFS
- Library of Francis de Sales Scientific Society

The "Studies and Dissertations" series (established in 2009) includes scientific monographs (books written by professors, habilitation, and PhD dissertations) and scientifically edited monographs. As part of the series, 15 publications will be published by the end of 2022. As part of the "Biblica et Theologica TNFS" series, initiated in 2016, seven works will be published by the end of 2022. Five works have been published as part of the "Library of Francis de Sales Scientific Society" series, initiated in 2008.

Another essential part of the Francis de Sales Scientific Society (TNFS) activities is the scientific patronage of various scientific events organized mainly by Salesian entities. During its first 15 years of activity, the TNFS has assumed patronage over 31 scientific conferences and symposiums.

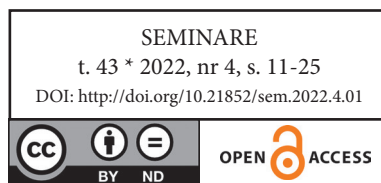
## CONCLUSION

This jubilee paper aims to show St Francis de Sales as the Bishop of Geneva, Doctor of the Church, and a great representative of Christian humanism. Through his life and activities, he had a profound impact on his contemporaries, not only contributing to the renewal of the Church but also promoting the spirituality of love, growth of inner life, and simplicity. In the Apostolic Letter *Totum Amoris Est* on the fourth centenary of the death of St Francis de Sales, Pope Francis writes that “All this was supremely evident in the life of the saintly Bishop of Annecy, and now, once more, it is entrusted to each of us.” For 15 years, the Francis de Sales Scientific Society has been trying to fulfill the mission of being the depositary of this heritage, conducting research, educational, and publishing activities in the spirit of the patron saint of writers and journalists.

## REFERENCES:

- Annual reports from 2008-2022 on the activities of the Francis de Sales Scientific Society. Accessed December 1, 2022. <http://tnfs.pl/aktualnosci/sprawozdania/>.
- “Minutes of meetings of the Management Board of the Francis de Sales Scientific Society for 2008-2022” In *The Archives of the Francis de Sales Scientific Society*.
- Bremond, Henri. 1916. *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France: depuis la fin des guerres de religion jusqu'à nos jours*. Vol. 1: *L'humanisme dévot (1580-1660)*. Paris Bloud et Gay.
- Fournier, Jean-Paul. 2004. “Actualite De Saint-François De Sales.” In *Kontemplacja miłości. Księga jubileuszowa z okazji 100-lecia pobytu siostr wizytek w Jasle (1903–2003)*, edited by Andrzej Garbacz, 63–66. Jasło–Rzeszów: Instytut Teologiczno–Pastoralny im. św. Józefa Sebastiana Pelczara w Rzeszowie.
- Łuczynski, Andrzej. 2018. *Młodzież zagrożona wykluczeniem. Prewencyjny potencjał pedagogii ks. Jana Bosko*. Lublin: TN KUL – KUL.
- Memorie Biografiche di san Giovanni Bosco*. 1898, editet by Giovanni Battista Lemoyne, Angelo Amadei, Eugenio Céria, vol. 1. Torino: SEI.
- Mierzwa, Tadeusz. 2004. “Doskonałość chrześcijanina świeckiego w nauczaniu św. Franciszka Salezego (1567–1622).” In *Kontemplacja miłości. Księga jubileuszowa z okazji 100-lecia pobytu siostr wizytek w Jasle (1903–2003)*, edited by Andrzej Garbacz, 17–61. Jasło–Rzeszów: Instytut Teologiczno–Pastoralny im. św. Józefa Sebastiana Pelczara w Rzeszowie.
- Nigg, Walter. 1980. *O wielkich świętych – inaczej*. Translated by Irena Naganowska et al. Poznań: Księgarnia Świętego Wojciecha.
- Rybałt, Jan. 2026. “Wstęp” In *Św. Franciszek Salezy. Wybór pism*, edited by Jan Rybałt, 5-115. Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax.

- Sadowski, Ryszard Feliks. 2008. "Teologiczne i filozoficzne podstawy humanizmu chrześcijańskiego świętego Franciszka Salezego". In *Wychowanie w służbie praw człowieka*, edited by Jerzy Gocko, Ryszard Feliks Sadowski, 203-224. Warszawa: Towarzystwo Naukowe Franciszka Salezego.
- Stella Pietro. 1986. "Don Bosco e S. Francesco di Sales: incontro fortuito o identità spirituale?" In *San Francesco di Sales e i salesiani di don Bosco*, edited by Juan Picca e Józef Strus, 139-159. Roma: LAS.
- Struś, Józef. 1989. "Franciszek Salezy." In *Encyklopedia katolicka*, edited by Piotr Hemperek et al., vol. 5, 459-461. Lublin: TN KUL.
- Zarzycki, Stanisław. 2008. *Rozwój życia duchowego i afektywność. Studium na postawie pism św. Franciszka Salezego*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL.



REV. ANDRZEJ DOMINIK KUCIŃSKI

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Rome

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5327-1670> \* [a.kucinski@live.com](mailto:a.kucinski@live.com)

Received: 23 Oct 2022; Reviewed: 27 Dec 2022; Accepted: 30 Dec 2022

## A FREE MAN IN SEARCH OF THE TRUTH ABOUT HIMSELF. AN ATTEMPT AT A MORAL-THEOLOGICAL REINTERPRETATION OF SOPHOCLES' "OEDIPUS THE KING"

### Abstract

Sophocles' "Oedipus the King" is one of the oldest and most famous tragedies that belong to the common patrimony of humanity. It raises issues to which each generation must find its own answer. Some of these issues become particularly relevant at moments when the foundations of common anthropological concepts are shaken, as they are at the present time. The reference to pre-Christian literary works can be a starting point for a dialogue with those who do not share the Christian worldview but are open to an exchange of reflections about man. In this article the author, starting from the specifics of the adaptation of the myth in the Sophocles' edition, through an outline of the wealth of interpretations of his tragedy through the centuries, arrives at a proposal for the moral-theological reinterpretation of this work in today's world with the help of two examples: the question of the origin of the person in the context of parenthood and moral responsibility in a world dominated by individualism and a weakened belief in actual human freedom.

**Keywords:** "Oedipus the King", parenthood, identity, moral responsibility, determinism

## WOLNY CZŁOWIEK W POSZUKIWANIU PRAWDY O SOBIE. PRÓBA TEOLOGICZNMORALNEJ AKTUALIZACJI „KRÓLA EDYPA” SOFOKLESA

### Abstrakt

*Król Edyp* Sofoklesa jest jedną z najstarszych i najbardziej znanych tragedii należących do wspólnego dziedzictwa ludzkości. Porusza zagadnienia, na które każde pokolenie musi znaleźć własną odpowiedź. Niektóre z tych zagadnień stają się szczególnie aktualne w momentach zachwiania fundamentów wspólnych koncepcji antropologicznych, jak ma to miejsce w obecnym czasie. Odniesienie do przedchrześcijańskich dzieł literackich może być wyjściem do dialogu z osobami niepodzielającymi światopoglądu chrześcijańskiego, ale otwartymi na wymianę refleksji o człowieku. W tym sensie w artykule autor, wychodząc od specyfiki adaptacji mitu w wydaniu Sofoklesa, poprzez zarys bogactwa interpretacji jego sztuki na przestrzeni wieków, dochodzi do propozycji teologicznomoralnej aktualizacji tego dzieła w dzisiejszym świecie przy pomocy dwóch przykładów: kwestii pochodzenia osoby w kontekście rodzicielstwa oraz odpowiedzialności moralnej w świecie zdominowanym przez indywidualizm oraz osłabioną wiarę w faktyczną wolność człowieka.

**Słowa kluczowe:** *Król Edyp*, rodzicielstwo, tożsamość, odpowiedzialność moralna, determinizm

## INTRODUCTION

Among the elements of ancient classical culture that have survived to our time and continue to shape social life, there is undoubtedly the theatrical tradition, in which tragedy occupied a special place with the ancient Greeks. They created a canon of this genre, comprising works “in which the center and driving force of the plot is the insurmountable conflict between the aspirations of an outstanding individual and higher forces: fate, the laws of history, social interest, moral norms, etc., leading inexorably to his defeat” (Sławiński 2002, 585-586). Tragedy makes it possible to vividly depict and stimulate reflection on the fundamental issues of human existence, especially in terms of the anxieties and contradictions that hinder it. To the ancients it helped to express feelings of disagreement with the experienced cruelties of fate, and thus in a way to overcome them, causing catharsis or “purification.”

One of the most famous Greek tragedies, which has seen countless adaptations, is Sophocles’ “Oedipus the King,” a play first staged in Athens in the fifth century BC. Its cultural success was not only due to the relevance of the themes taken up or its artistic qualities, but also to its reception over time. The questions and answers given by Sophocles (497/496-406 BC) to his contemporaries about man’s condition and fate appear in a new light at a moment of anthropological turmoil of our time. This turmoil concerns the very identity of man, stretched between uncertainty about his own gender (now treated as a rather fluid, ambiguous and multifaceted reality) and the question about the further course of evolution (which seems to be able to be controlled at last by man, as transhumanism promises). Of course, the question remains to what extent modern man is inclined to return to the works of antiquity, but it is certain that he too will not escape timeless questions, even if he does not consciously pose them to himself. This also applies to the younger generation, which in the age of the dominance of social media, i.e., information fast-food, may sometimes seem not to care about classical cultural currents.

We may then look at these timeless issues from the point of view of moral theology. In this way, it can more easily enter into dialogue with the post-Christian world, referring to the common cultural heritage of humanity, “untainted” in its genesis by the temporal term “after Christ.” This is all the more important insofar as progressive secularization is becoming increasingly distrustful and even hostile to any religiously motivated arguments. An appeal to classical culture could allow the essential contents of the Gospel to be conveyed if they were shown as apt answers to the inevitable problems posed by these timeless, albeit pre-Christian works.

This article is an attempt to apply a moral-theological reinterpretation to “Oedipus the King” in Sophocles’ rendition, not to provide another literary reading of the play, but to treat the play as a background for the aforementioned considerations. The problems highlighted cannot be adequately developed in this context, hence there is no place here to join the theological discussions undertaken



regarding these specific issues. But they are meant as an invitation to reflect on the possibilities of using the message of the play in the moral-theological confrontation with today's challenges.<sup>1</sup>

In order to properly contextualize today's reception of this work, the starting point is to show the specifics of Sophocles' adaptation of the myth. Next, some important aspects of the play's interpretation over the centuries will be outlined, so that the third part will focus on two examples of possible current moral-theological meaning of the work.

## 1. SOPHOCLES' INTERPRETATION OF THE MYTH OF OEDIPUS

The myth of Oedipus was taken up by various ancient authors<sup>2</sup> which resulted in different interpretations. But the individual authors had to refer to certain common elements of this original story. "Oedipus the King" is only a part of Sophocles' trilogy devoted to it (along with "Antigone" and "Oedipus at Colonus"), hence the myth itself covers more content than the work discussed here. The mythical narrative of Oedipus belongs to the history of the rulers of Thebes, the Labdacid family. Its descriptions can be found in relevant publications (e.g. Lubach 1992, 152-154; Libera 2012, 7-11). At the center of the myth is the tragic fate of the king of Thebes, Oedipus who, raised in Corinth by the orchestration of an inexorable fate, unwittingly kills his father Laius in an accidental conflict. Then, as a reward for defeating the Sphinx plaguing Thebes by answering its riddle, he becomes king of the city and marries the dowager queen, Jocasta, i.e. his mother, conceiving four children with her. When everything comes to light, Jocasta commits suicide and Oedipus in despair blinds himself.

In his adaptation of the myth (Libera 2012, 12-14), Sophocles departs significantly from the version of the elder Aeschylus, who treats the seduction by Oedipus' father, Laius, of Chrysippus, son of king Pelops, which resulted in the young prince's suicide, as the first fault in the Labdacid family, casting a shadow

---

<sup>1</sup> On June 13, 2022, the play "Oedipus the King," directed by Jacek Raginis-Królikiewicz, won the Grand Prize of the 21st Festival of Polish Radio Theater and Polish Television Theater "Two Theaters 2022." Earlier, on April 25th of the same year, the premiere of this play took place at the "Television Theater of Polish Television" (TVP). The immediate cause for reflection on the relevance of the message of "Oedipus the King" from the perspective of timeless moral issues was the request of the director of the play, addressed to the author of this article, to help him search for aspects of this ancient work by Sophocles that could be included in a contemporary update. The aforementioned success of the Raginis-Królikiewicz edition of "Oedipus the King" can be taken as a sign of the vitality of classical literature.

<sup>2</sup> The works of some of these authors have not survived at all (except for their titles). In his general presentation, Laubach mentions Achaëus of Eretria (c. 484 – c. 401 BC), Nikomachos of Alexandria (5th century BC), Xenocles (5<sup>th</sup>-4th century BC), Meletus of Athens (5th century BC), but of greatest importance were the three great Athenian authors of the 5th century BC: Aeschylus (525-456 BC), Euripides (c. 480 – c. 406 BC) and Sophocles, situated chronologically between the latter two (Lubach 1992, 153).

over subsequent generations. Sophocles omits not only this theme, but also the wrath of goddess Hera, resulting in the arrival of the Sphinx, while an additional oracle for Oedipus becomes important in his interpretation. Another peculiarity of Sophocles' interpretation according to Libera is the abandonment of an external perspective in favor of an internal one (from the protagonist's point of view) and a retrospective narrative instead of a chronological one (the story is shown from the end). Sophocles presents a play on the general human condition, identifying his hero with every human being. Oedipus doesn't really know who he is, and what he knows from others may not be true. In this way, human identity as such is portrayed as fuzzy: he doesn't fully know where he came from. Such a man can obtain happiness by satisfying his needs and ambitions, or suffer unhappiness through suffering. Significant are the last words of the play, referring to traditional Greek thought and uttered by Corypheus as a final reflection on human fate based on the story of Oedipus, warning against conviction of one's own success before the end of the life (Sofokles 2012, vv. 1528-1530)<sup>3</sup>. The author demonstrates trenchantly that, on the one hand, the condition of happiness is to have offspring, but on the other hand, this offspring is exposed to misfortune. Life choices always remain subject to error despite good intentions. Hence Sophocles concludes in the unfinished "Oedipus at Colonus" – it is better not to be born at all or to return to where you came from (Libera 2012, 14).

In addition, the author of "Oedipus the King" refers to the version of the myth contained in the so-called "Delphic Oedipodeia," where, unlike the "Cyclic Oedipodeia," Oedipus does not remarry after the death of Jocasta, and where the role of god Apollo and the infallibility of his oracle are emphasized, as well as the unnaturalness of Oedipus' relationship with his mother (Chodkowski 2007, 13-15; Lubach 1992, 154).

Sophocles constructs his expressive characters according to the rules of ancient tragedy (Popławska and Rzehak 2008, 334-335). Oedipus' crime is the result of the so-called "tragic flaw," by which we speak of "tragic guilt." His misfortune is compounded by his own pride (*hybris*), triggering a conflict with soothsayer Teresias and Creon, brother of Jokasta, whom he accuses of plotting against him on the basis of the fortune-teller's initial words, revealing to him the identity of Laius' killer. Through *hybris*, he hastily curses the killer, namely himself. The plot thus contains a *peripeteia*, an "abrupt turn", where the outcome of the actions is opposite to the protagonist's initial intentions and culminates in the final catastrophe, which is Jocasta's suicide and Oedipus' self-mutilation as well as the curse that haunts their offspring.

According to the canon of rules, tragedy was supposed to evoke "pity and trepidation" in the audience. In Sophocles, this happens in the first place thanks to imbuing the play with "tragic irony": the protagonist gradually discovers the

---

<sup>3</sup> In references to "Oedipus the King", I use A. Libera's translation. All the translations from foreign texts are mine.

truth, which the audience (familiar with the content of the myth) already knows (Chodkowski 2007, 29). Since Oedipus is neither a ruthless villain (he doesn't know what he's doing) nor an angel (he is prone to anger), the possibility of positive identification with him and thus the intensity of feelings in the audience is increased, as they are prepared to hear the whole truth. In one of the songs of the chorus, Sophocles can thus include imperatives relevant to religious Greek thought: "the need for purity in words and deeds as a condition for a happy life, adherence to the eternal truths of God, avoidance of the dangers caused by an attitude of pride – and finally, he warns that a lack of faith in the oracles undermines the foundations of religion itself" (Chodkowski 2007, 44). Oedipus' catastrophe manifests itself in contrast: the king blessed at the beginning by his people becomes a blind man completely dependent on someone else's will (Chodkowski 2007, 61), and the accumulation of misfortunes falling on the characters is so exceptional that the final message of the tragedy becomes additionally harrowing for the viewer, who notices the role of one's own fate, which is not originated by fault of one's own: we are not the masters of our actions, but depend on a higher power (Chodkowski 2007, 71).

In conclusion, it can be said that the essence of Sophocles' adaptation of the myth centers on this very statement: man is ultimately helpless in the face of his fate, but our suffering can be alleviated by humbly submitting to divine judgment.

## 2. SELECTED ASPECTS OF THE RECEPTION HISTORY OF "OEDIPUS THE KING"

The importance of Sophocles' work was determined by the artistry of its author, supported decades later by Aristotle's authority, who declared "Oedipus the King" to be "the most beautiful tragedy" (Chodkowski 2007, 67). The concentration of evil through the breaking of two taboos (patricide and incest) and the inevitability of misfortune as a universal motif of human existence also intensified the power of the play's impact on subsequent generations, influencing the fact that Sophocles' hero became a timeless archetype (Libera 2012, 5-7). Significant development of interest in the character of Oedipus and especially in the work of Sophocles began with modernity, especially from the 17th century, when the tragedy entered permanently into the canon of Western drama<sup>4</sup>. At first, however, the plays were rather loosely based on the Oedipus motif with allusions to modern times, and the situation changed only in modernism, at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, when a particularly large number of works about this character were written. Its importance was emphasized, among other things, by the reference in the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), while discussing the Apollonian and Dionysian drives as constitutive of Greek culture.

---

<sup>4</sup>In the synthesis of the reception history of the Oedipus motif presented here, I refer essentially, except in the places specified, to the analysis: Lubach 1992, 156-181.

The popularity of the Oedipus myth and its recognition in mass culture in the 20th century was particularly influenced by the psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud, who found in this character a model for his theory of the so-called “Oedipus complex,” i.e., the claim that in early human development there is a phase in which a person feels sexual attraction to a parent of the opposite sex and a desire to remove a parent of the same sex as a rival. According to Freud, the popularity of this play with contemporaries was due to their realization of the existence of subconscious, primal feelings in them – the desire to kill the father and to have sex with the mother (Chodkowski 2007, 47). In the case of boys, fear of the father eventually causes the suppression of the desire to have sex with the mother, through which the superego is formed, i.e., identification with the norms of the parents takes place. The theory of the Oedipus complex was later questioned, among other things, due to its naturalistic explanation of the processes of culture formation and the treatment of pathological phenomena of the upbringing period as a universal phenomenon (Dux 2019, 163-197). It can also hardly be said to have anything to do with the Oedipus myth, since the latter “actually has sex with his mother, and his fear stems from an oracle, not from an awareness of danger” (Chodkowski 2007, 47). This does not change the fact that the name “Oedipus complex” still exists in the popular consciousness.

The different treatment of the Oedipus myth in the 20th century was also conditioned by treating it as a costume for expressing issues relevant to modern times, thus going beyond the canon of mythological presentations in adapted ancient works. Some works of the time use only the motif itself, and not the character of Oedipus directly. In the 1950s, on the other hand, existentialism dominated in theatrical art, resulting, among other things, in the mythologization of drama.

In 1967, “Oedipus the King” was notably subject for a film adaptation by Pier Paolo Pasolini.

In Polish literature, Oedipus was not a popular character for a long time, as especially during the Partitions of Poland (Romanticism and Positivism) there was a demand for other heroes. The situation began to change from the period of Young Poland (the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries), and immediately after World War II the existentialist perspective reached Poland as well. In general, the work becomes attractive as a generalization of the drama of a man helpless in the face of his own fate. Moreover, in the 20th century, with the development of staging possibilities and director’s freedom, various creative stagings of “Oedipus the King” appeared, even without interference with the text of the drama. The tradition of such adaptations seems to include the recent television adaptation of Raginis-Królikiewicz, mentioned at the beginning, where the temporal context clearly influenced the presentation of the plague devastating Thebes using images familiar with the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic; moreover, apocalyptic elements were used in the film’s interpretation, and the character of Oedipus was portrayed along the lines of modern celebrities or popular politicians (Trójka 2022).

The centuries-long reception of the Oedipus motif, and in particular one of its original adaptations in Sophocles' work, indicates the interpretive richness of this tragedy, generating disputes among scholars up to today. It also turns out possible to challenge even seemingly permanently established hermeneutical canons. Thus, Wolfgang Schadewaldt, as early as 1956, among other things, considered outdated the treatment of the tragedy as a "drama about destiny," justifying it by the fact that Greek tragedy knows no absolute fatalism, i.e., *compulsion* to act (Schadewaldt 1956, 21-31). As the most important aspect of his interpretation, Schadewaldt points to the context of the work's composition: the '20s of the 5th century BC, in Athens during the Peloponnesian War, after the death of the Athenian leader Pericles due to a plague (!), in a situation of imminent collapse of the world known to Sophocles, including the "de-divinization" (*Entgöttlichung*) of social space. In view of this, there must be a cleansing through the tragic sacrifice of an outstanding man. He who is soiled by evil is at the same time one of the noblest, and this is what is so tragic. Similarly, according to this author, it is impossible to talk about the question of guilt with regard to Oedipus, nor of "metaphysical guilt," since he commits all evil acts unconsciously. Instead, one should talk about the drama of discovering the truth, and the tragedy lies in the fact that Oedipus' path to discovering the truth about himself is at the same time the path of his catastrophe. The motif of the thirst for knowledge, so strong in Sophocles' drama, also takes on special significance in the context of our modern information civilization. Ultimately, therefore, this tragedy can be regarded as a multi-threaded generator of extensive reflections on man: "Sophocles' 'Oedipus the King' is nothing less than a tragedy about man in general, a stirring *ecce homo* that still concerns us today" (Schadewaldt 1956, 31-32). The implication is that "Oedipus the King" can still agitate, because modern man, too, still remains a mystery to himself.

### 3. CONTEMPORARY EXEMPLIFICATION OF THE MORAL-THEOLOGICAL ADAPTATION OF "OEDIPUS THE KING"

The open questions of interpreting "Oedipus the King" raised and the current importance of anthropological issues, while there is an increasingly profound re-evaluation of traditional claims about human being, prompt moral-theological reflection on the basis of this work. The following exemplifies two areas where such reflection, in the author's opinion, is particularly relevant today.

#### A. Parenthood and the mystery of one's own origins

One of the timeless issues that comes to the fore in "Oedipus the King", regardless of its specific interpretation, is the question of parental relations or the mystery of one's own origins. The latter is the main driving force behind the plot of Sophocles' play. The unrestrained desire to know one's own past, which defines one's identity, can be seen as a sign of recklessness or disordered curiosity, but also as an expression of people's natural desire to know about themselves. Oedipus is an example of how this riddle can

impinge on one's entire life, making it inconvenient and demanding a solution, even at the cost of leading oneself to disaster. One may ask, then, whether it would not have been better for Oedipus to give up and remain in a "comfortable unconsciousness." Oedipus, however, is unable to abandon this pursuit. Even if he were to give up knowing the truth, having already known a part of it, he would have no more peace, and so his life would become unbearable (Sofokles 2012, vv. 1076-1078).

And it is at the moment of finding out the whole truth that Oedipus' greatness is revealed to the highest degree, as he makes an effort to face the most difficult question of his life – the awareness of who he is. Moreover, finding this out is impossible without determining blood ties.

In the current era, with the rapid advances in technology, the unambiguity in matters of kinship and descent that Oedipus achieved is becoming increasingly blurred and sometimes even impossible. As the dominant consumer culture puts well-being and the fulfillment of dreams first, and enduring human nature ceases to be the absolute point of reference and becomes instrumentalized, further taboos concerning the emergence of human life are being broken. As a result of genetic and reproductive manipulation, a human being today can have several parents (e.g., those who adopted him, those from whom genetic material was taken, or those in whose body the human being developed). In this situation, more and more people do not know who their father (and sometimes even their mother) is, with the very concepts of "father" and "mother" ceasing to be unambiguous, as it is increasingly necessary to specify what kind of parenthood is meant (e.g. "social," "genetic," "biological") (Błasiak 2017, 31). Of course, the problem of the disintegration of the ("traditional") family by the increase in divorce and patchwork families, and the multiplied disorientation in matters of family ties and kinship relations as a result, is a topic that would merit separate discussion in this context as well.

Gender in parenthood also seems to be playing less and less of a role now that there is open talk of "rainbow families" and no difference in raising children by homosexual and heterosexual couples. The constant broadening of the definition of the family to include more and more new social phenomena, however marginal, contributes to the general confusion about the morality of various experiments on this basic area of human life. It is already technically possible after age 60 to give birth to children, to freeze one's own egg cells in order to postpone conception "for later" (social freezing) and to carry out fertilization with sperm from dead men. There is talk of an artificial uterus to finally liberate women from the "tyranny" of their reproductive biology. Children can also be ordered according to a desired genetic profile as so-called "designer babies". One has to assume that the anthropological chaos that is the inevitable consequence of many of these phenomena, while already apparent today, is likely to manifest itself with even greater force in future generations.

The myth of Oedipus indicates that the desire to know (unbeknownst to themselves) one's parents – first and foremost the father, and with him perhaps

other relatives – is not some additional issue in life that one does not need to be particularly concerned about, but is one of the most primal human needs, the fulfilment of which depends on the realization of one's own existence. As a result of cultural changes, more and more people are now experiencing this desire.

Related to this issue is also the problem of continuity of generations. In Western civilization, with the spread of individualistic attitudes and the decline in the sense of responsibility for the community of which one is a part, the awareness that procreation is necessary for the survival of this community has also been shaken. A person, who from an early age is accustomed to the idea that he or she primarily has rights and that others have obligations, often takes no more interest in the community than as a source of some benefits supposedly due to him or her under certain contracts. The awareness that having one's own children influences those benefits to continue has been largely lost in younger generations. While in the Oedipus myth the strong desire to have offspring corresponds to the values of the time, nowadays post-industrial societies in general have a skeptical view of procreation, being already experienced in ways to avoid conception or get rid of its effects.

Without recalling at this point the well-known teaching of the Church on the value of procreation and parenthood and their significance for the human condition, it is at least worth mentioning that the connection of sexuality with parenthood and with the identity of the person is a fundamental anthropological fact, if one agrees that personal experience from the moment of conception proceeds through the interaction of the male and female factors, without which fertilization cannot occur (Sgreccia 2019, 495). One can, of course, try to circumvent or obscure this fact by means of various techniques or the subsequent socialization of the human being, but this will, however, always be secondary to this primordial experience of humanity, that life has an intrinsic connection with the biological combination of genetic materials derived from man and woman. This primordality, in turn, forces us to at least reflect on the meaning of the human bipolarity and on the consequences of its rejection.

Oedipus is not wrong in recognizing that there is such a thing as an inappropriate relationship with his mother's body, and that this relationship decisively affects his entire existence. The signing of the body with sexuality also applies to the whole person, because the body cannot be separated from it. And it is precisely because the entirety of the person is integrally inscribed in bodily structures that the physical relationship between two people touches the depths of their personal identity, involving other dimensions of the person besides the body: the soul and the spirit. The complementarity of persons is a natural condition for the exchange taking place between them, the sign and actualization of which becomes bodily union. This complementarity conditions love, which consists of self-giving and which opens at the same time to the gift of new life (Melina 2009, 76-77). In this manner the unity of spousal and parental love is stated in the 1987 document on respect for human life in its origins of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: "Spouses mutually express

their personal love in the 'language of the body,' which clearly involves both 'spousal meanings' and parental ones. The conjugal act by which the couple mutually expresses their self-gift at the same time expresses openness to the gift of life. It is an act that is inseparably corporal and spiritual. (...) In order to respect the language of their bodies and their natural generosity, the conjugal union must take place with respect for its openness to procreation; and the procreation of a person must be the fruit and the result of married love" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 1987, II.B.4).

Hence, there is an association in Catholic moral doctrine, which is oriented toward the integrity of the person, between sexuality and the complementarity of masculinity and femininity, as well as between this complementarity and parenthood, that determines the identity of successive human beings. This association helps to approach with renewed seriousness the motif of the restless search for the truth about one's origins as the archetype of human attitudes in "Oedipus the King", in order to recognize that this awareness belongs to the natural needs of human being, which cannot be disregarded.

#### B. Moral Responsibility vs. Determination by Fate

What in modern times fills in "Oedipus the King" with exceptional indignation and generates an internal protest in people accustomed to the narrative of "being the architect of one's own fortune" (Szutta 2021, 37) is undoubtedly the question of Oedipus' guilt, which is the subject of multiple interpretations (Chodkowski 2007, 76). At first glance, "Oedipus the King" surprises due to the concept of moral guilt regardless of (un)awareness of the committed act. After all, the heir of a culture built on the Judeo-Christian tradition has known at least since the time of the prophet Ezekiel (cf. Ez 18) the principle that punishment falls only on the perpetrator, not on his relatives. Moreover, in order to be fully responsible for one's actions, one must be aware of them (Szutta 2021, 37). Therefore, it is all the easier to have solidarity with Oedipus, who bears no moral guilt for what happened to him (unless we focus on the unconscious murder of his father, which today we might call "exceeding the limits of self-defense," but the mere fact of murder in this situation for the mentality of "Oedipus the King" time was not a fundamental problem).

In a world ruled by destiny, all this is irrelevant. Ancient fatalism pronounces the inevitability of human fate. But the story of Oedipus regarding the pre-determined nature of his actions is not so clear-cut as to treat his fate directly as a "tragedy of destiny" (Lubach 1992, 154-155). Indeed, on the plot of the drama, Oedipus fulfils acts of free will (he rules, makes decisions, investigates, etc.). The problem arises, however, when the audience discovers that there is a second plane, that of higher forces, which contains tragic necessity (which is not, however, pure determinism, for the hero's actions themselves are free). It is this inevitability that requires that, in spite of all his (real) strength, intelligence, and freedom of action, the hero nevertheless turns out to be limited and weak in the supernatural order. Chodkowski finds here the universal and timeless message of the tragedy: "What,



then, is the lesson that can be drawn from the story of Oedipus, as presented in Sophocles' play? It is a lesson about the fragility of human being's fate and the limitation of their knowledge" (Chodkowski 2007, 76). One can also put it even more radically: "Modern person can seemingly do anything, and yet he or she stumbles at any chance, at any imperfection of probability. And this fall often turns out to be fatal" (Wesołowska 2005, 69).

Chodkowski also draws attention to an important distinction in Oedipus' guilt, present in the literature of the subject (Chodkowski 2007, 76-78): one can speak here not so much of *moral* guilt, but of *tragic* guilt. Oedipus had no knowledge at the time of his choice (therefore he could not bear moral guilt). Thus, in this view, the problem of (personal) responsibility is not posed at all. Oedipus' actions did bring him disaster in the form of a change of fortune (hence we speak of *tragic* guilt), but the evil that was done was already attributed to what he could have chosen.

The problem described can also be seen in the issue of regret and conversion, which are inextricably linked to guilt. In addition to the fact that Oedipus' personal moral guilt cannot be spoken of, it is also difficult to find in Sophocles, or in ancient Greek mentality in general, an adequate post-positive conception of regret (Jeremias, Eßer and Schröer 2010). Therefore, Oedipus cannot regret something that he had no idea about at the time of committing it, but only recognize his terrible fate and despair because of it. It's different in Christianity: where it is possible to attribute responsibility for specific actions to specific individuals, regret is a prerequisite toward conversion, a change of direction made possible by Christ's sacrifice.

Finally, it can be considered that it is Oedipus' greatness in his overwhelming pursuit of truth and justice that brings him disaster (Lubach 1992, 155). Undoubtedly, this natural human striving for truth is hampered today by the prevailing pluralism, relativism and cognitive skepticism about the existence of one truth. In the practice of many people's lives today, it also seems fundamental to ask whether the truth really "sets one free" (cf. John 8:32), or whether it rather becomes inconvenient knowledge, forcing one to reevaluate and change direction. When it comes to arguing about the most important things, establishing the main lines of social conduct, it sometimes seems that the risk of conflicts is too great to pursue general settlements. The very concept of man and his place in the world become the subject of such disputes. On the other hand, having gained more and more knowledge about reality, putting into our hands sometimes unprecedented means of controlling others and ourselves, we are forced to develop at the same time an ethical reflection that also includes the possible consequences of our own actions, so that our knowledge does not turn against us. This is why the pursuit of truth, however difficult it may be, is so necessary for a life worthy of the name "human," i.e. marked by conscious and free choices that actualize the unique dignity of man. Oedipus could therefore be a model of such a pursuit of truth, which may cost him dearly, but allows man to preserve his humanity.

However, if "fatalism" in the sense of the limitation of a weak person by higher forces would be reconcilable with the existence of free action, in the sense

outlined above, then some of today's tendencies in the social and natural sciences aim to derelict the latter, seemingly unshakeable *differentia specifica* of human condition as well. As Robert Spaemann aptly notes, in this model of determinism, the conditioning of natural phenomena by the laws of nature is transferred to the human psyche. As a result, human acts, hitherto considered to be manifestations of freedom, could be treated merely as the consequence of some neuronal interactions generated by an unspecified biological "nature," which would, in effect, make any ethics impossible (Spaemann 2006, 206-214). This monistic vision of person would be an exact negation of the Enlightenment affirmation of the human subject as an independent center of its own action. However, the reconciliation of human nature in the sense of the objective conditioning of the individual with the perspective of the person, i.e., the unique, subjective and free form of the realization of this nature, does not have to take place by rejecting one or the other, but can transpire on the basis of the mutual, symbiotic relationship of the two factors within the person. This is demonstrated by Spaemann when he speaks about the permanent relation of freedom to human nature, which thus transcends itself, but nevertheless remains itself in the act of individual realization (Spaemann 1973, 956-969). For this, however, it is necessary to abandon the modern paradigm of exploitation, i.e., unfettered domination over nature (both non-human and one's own nature) in favor of respecting its purposefulness (Spaemann 1973, 965). With such a paradigm of respect for nature, it is possible to affirm free will in relation to reason as the necessary conditions for the self-realization of person, called and capable of his own unforced response to God's saving initiative (Kokoszka 2005, 31-32).

The question of Oedipus' responsibility—regardless of the validity of such a claim in a moral sense, as outlined above—is also a question of the consequences of his own actions on those around him. Oedipus is concerned about the fate of his children, primarily his daughters, who are also marked by his disgrace as having been born of incest (Sofokles 2012, vv. 1486-1496).

The conviction of the disgrace caused by parents to their children, or that which weighs on subsequent generations due to the sins of their ancestors, is a good background for highlighting the Church's teaching in this regard. A particular field concerned with this aspect of the Oedipus story today is the question of the dignity of the emergence of human life, in the context of various immoral techniques of artificial procreation. Since "every person must be respected for himself: in this consists the dignity and right of every human being from his or her beginning" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 1987, I.6), in view of the accusations that are emerging that the Church rejects persons conceived in a "wicked" way, i.e. that contradicts their dignity, it should be emphasized that: "Although the manner in which human conception is achieved with IVF and ET cannot be approved, every child which comes into the world must in any case be accepted as a living gift of the divine Goodness and must be brought up with love" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 1987, II.B.5). Human dignity does not depend on the

circumstances of the origin of life, even if this fact itself is the result of a forbidden act. One cannot be deprived of this dignity, nor can deprive him- or herself of it nor can it itself be graded. However, this does not change the fact that the aforementioned circumstances can negatively affect a person's life and cause him or her suffering. Hence, the Magisterium sees the question of the consequences of a person's actions towards third parties differently from Oedipus: while no, even incestuous relationships or other acts affecting the identity of specific people, can take away their ontic dignity, the consequences of the sins of parents can injure their offspring.

This distinction in bioethical contexts can be illustrated as follows: "In the face of this manipulation of the human being in his or her embryonic state, it needs to be repeated that 'God's love does not differentiate between the newly conceived infant still in his or her mother's womb and the child or young person, or the adult and the elderly person. God does not distinguish between them because he sees an impression of his own image and likeness (Gen 1:26) in each one... Therefore, the Magisterium of the Church has constantly proclaimed the sacred and inviolable character of every human life from its conception until its natural end'" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 2008, 16). This does not mean, however, that all ways of bringing others into existence are correct; those which have their roots in acts that can cause evil are unacceptable: "Because the risks connected to any genetic manipulation are considerable and as yet not fully controllable, *in the present state of research, it is not morally permissible to act in a way that may cause possible harm to the resulting progeny*" (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 2008, 26, emphasis in original). In this context, "Oedipus the King" becomes an incentive to rethink interpersonal relationships, which, although they affect the lives of individuals, do not completely determine them. The teaching of the Church may prove helpful here in overcoming extreme attitudes about human interdependence: the complete determination of an individual's fate by the actions of others, but also his or her absolute autonomy, divested of all relationality.

## CONCLUSION

As this article attempted to show, a return to the timeless themes addressed in "Oedipus the King" can prompt reflection on relevant moral-theological issues of today. This reflection can, on the one hand, lead to a current answer to the questions about personhood posed by Sophocles, and on the other hand, it can use his work to face new anthropological challenges on the basis of those questions, developing issues already noticed in the fifth century BC. At the same time, the philosophical and pre-Christian background of the work in question allows, by contrast, to see the specificity of the moral teaching of the Church to try to propose it anew, starting from the anxieties and aspirations that have always occupied the

human race. Such issues include the mystery of the origin of person and the whole complex of questions related to parenthood and the transmission of life, which determines the identity of human being, the various taboos that regulate this domain, as well as moral responsibility in the face of deterministic doubt in the reasonableness and freedom of human nature. While “Oedipus the King” brings to the fore many timeless intuitions, such as the necessity of knowing one’s own identity for the right development of human being, and the limitation of human acting due to factors beyond one’s will, Christianity brings its own unique linkage of human greatness and weakness through a directly proportional relationship: as an unnecessary being that may not exist and is dependent on other parts of creation, person is at the same time open to eternity and capable of free choices that realistically co-determine that eternity.

#### REFERENCES:

- Błasiak, Anna. 2017. “(Nowy) wymiar rodzicielstwa – wybrane aspekty.” In *Rodzicielstwo w wybranych zagadnieniach pedagogicznych*, edited by Danuta Opozda and Magdalena Leśniak, 29-43. Lublin: Episteme.
- Chodkowski, Robert R. 2007. “Wstęp.” In Sofokles. *Król Edyp*. Przetłumaczył, wstępem i przypisami opatrzył Robert R. Chodkowski, 7-80. Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL.
- Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. 1987. *Instrukcja o szacunku dla rodzącego się życia ludzkiego i o godności jego przekazywania “Donum Vitae.” Odpowiedzi na niektóre aktualne zagadnienia*. Accessed by: 22.05.2022. [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19870222\\_respect-for-human-life\\_pl.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19870222_respect-for-human-life_pl.html).
- Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. 2008. *Instrukcja “Dignitas personae” dotycząca niektórych problemów bioetycznych*. Accessed by: 22.05.2022. [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20081208\\_dignitas-personae\\_pl.html#\\_ftn2](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20081208_dignitas-personae_pl.html#_ftn2).
- Dux, Günter. 2019<sup>2</sup>. *Geschlecht und Gesellschaft – Warum wir lieben. Die romantische Liebe nach dem Verlust der Welt*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.
- Jeremias, Jörg, Albert Eßer and Henning Schröer. 2010. “Reue. II: Philosophisch-ethisch. 2. Die Bedeutung der Reue in Antike, Mittelalter und Neuzeit.” In *Theologische Realenzyklopädie Online*. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter. Accessed by: 22.05.2022. [https://www.degruyter.com/database/TRE/entry/tre.29\\_099\\_1/html](https://www.degruyter.com/database/TRE/entry/tre.29_099_1/html).
- Kokoszka, Adam. 2005. *Teologia moralna fundamentalna*. Tarnów: Biblos.
- Libera, Antoni. 2012. “Od tłumacza.” In Sofokles. *Król Edyp*. Spolszczył i opracował Antoni Libera, 5-17. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy.
- Lubach, Andrzej. 1992. “Edyp.” In *Mit, człowiek, literatura*, 151-183. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

- Melina, Livio. 2009. *Liebe auf katholisch. Ein Handbuch für heute*. Augsburg: Sankt-Ulrich.
- Popławska, Anna and Wojciech Rzehak. 2008. "Sofokles, *Król Edyp*." In *Antologia tragedii greckiej*, edited by Anna Popławska and Wojciech Rzehak, 330-337. Kraków: GREG.
- Schadewaldt, Wolfgang. 1956. "Der König Ödipus des Sophokles in neuer Deutung." *Schweizer Monatshefte. Zeitschrift für Politik, Wirtschaft, Kultur* 36(1): 21-31.
- Sgreccia, Elio. 2019<sup>4</sup>. *Manuale di bioetica. Volume I. Fondamenti di etica medica*. Milano: Vita e Pensiero.
- Sławiński, Janusz. 2002. "Tragedia." In *Słownik terminów literackich*, edited by Janusz Sławiński, 585-587. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich.
- Sofokles. 2012. *Król Edyp. Spolszczył i opracował Antoni Libera*. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy.
- Spaemann, Robert. 1973. "Natur." In *Handbuch philosophischer Grundbegriffe*, edited by Hermann Krings, Michael Baumgartner and Christoph Wild, vol. 2, 956-969. München: Kösel.
- Spaemann, Robert. 2006. *Persons. The Difference between 'Someone' and 'Something'*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Szutta, Natasza, 2021. "Król Edyp i etyczne konsekwencje fatalizmu." *Filozofuj! Magazyn popularyzujący filozofię* 37(1): 36-37.
- Trójka (Polskie Radio). 2022. "Król Edyp". *Jacek Raginis-Królikiewicz i jego apokaliptyczna wersja opowieści o zarazie*. Accessed by: 22.06.2022. <https://trojka.polskieradio.pl/arttykul/2981296,Krol-Edyp-Jacek-RaginisKrolikiewicz-i-jego-o-apokaliptyczna-wersja-opowieosci-o-zarazie>.
- Wesołowska, Elżbieta. 2005. "Homo faber. Tragizm naszych czasów." In *Problemy tragedii i tragizmu. Studia i szkice*, edited by Halina Krukowska and Jarosław Ławski, 63-71. Białystok: Instytut Filologii Polskiej Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku.



SEMINARE

t. 43 \* 2022, nr 4, s. 27-40

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.21852/sem.2022.4.02>



REV. JAN KAZIMIERZ PRZYBYŁOWSKI

Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8814-0504> \* [j.przybylowski@uksw.edu.pl](mailto:j.przybylowski@uksw.edu.pl)

Received: 31 Oct 2022; Reviewed: 15 Nov 2022; Accepted: 30 Dec 2022

## ECCLESIALITY AND HUMAN SOCIALIZATION IN THE ASPECT OF APPLIED THEOLOGY

### Abstract

Applied theology is the scientific reflection on the daily “growth” of man, who lives every day in the world and there fulfils himself and realizes his existential vocation, and Christians build the Kingdom of God. From the perspective of applied theology, three main principles can be distinguished that link ecclesiology and socialization: respect for truth, social justice and charity. In applied theology, it is possible to undertake scientific reflection on ecclesiology without violating pastoral theology’s right to study the Church and its salvific mission. However, in the search for knowledge about the dimensions of human social life, authoritarian and abstract universalism should be avoided.

**Keywords:** pastoral theology, applied theology, ecclesiality, socialization

### EKLEZJALNOŚĆ I SOCJALIZACJA CZŁOWIEKA W ASPEKCIE TEOLOGII STOSOWANEJ

### Abstrakt

Teologia stosowana jest nauką refleksją o codziennym „wzrastaniu” człowieka, który żyje na co dzień w świecie i tam spełnia siebie, i realizuje swoje powołanie egzystencjalne, a chrześcijanie budują Królestwo Boże. Z perspektywy teologii stosowanej można wyróżnić trzy główne zasady łączące kościelność i społecznienie: poszanowanie dla prawdy, sprawiedliwość społeczną i miłość. W teologii stosowanej można podjąć refleksję naukową na temat kościelności, bez naruszania prawa teologii pastoralnej do badania Kościoła i jego misji zbawczej. W poszukiwaniu wiedzy na temat wymiaru społecznego życia człowieka należy jednak unikać autorytarnego i abstrakcyjnego uniwersalizmu.

**Słowa kluczowe:** teologia pastoralna, teologia stosowana, kościelność, społecznienie

## INTRODUCTION

Pastoral theology occupies a very important place in the history of the Church, and it has been the subject of many scholarly treatises. Due to historical conditions of salvific activity, pastoral theologians primarily concentrated their attention on priests, who, through their ordination, act “in the person of Christ” being educators of God’s people in the faith, preachers, as well as ministers of the Eucharist and the other sacraments (Paul VI 1975, 68). It was with the development of pastoral ecclesiology and the slow process of opening up to external changes (socio-cultural conditions), that the role of the laity became increasingly appreciated in Church activities. This was explicitly expressed by the Council Fathers, who stated that priests “were not ordained by Christ to take upon themselves alone the entire salvific mission of the Church toward the world. On the contrary they understand that it is their noble duty to shepherd the faithful and to recognize their ministries and charisms, so that all according to their proper roles may cooperate in this common undertaking with one mind” (Second Vatican Council 1964, 30).

### 1. PASTORAL THEOLOGY AND APPLIED THEOLOGY

Pastoral theology occupies a prominent place in theological sciences, and this is due to historical reasons (as it is a science about the Church’s implementation of the salvific mission, i.e., pastoral care), as well as to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, which includes orientation of theology to pastoral practice, or to the development of post-conciliar theology in the spirit of pastoral care for the Church (Kamiński 1983, 33-64).

Modern pastoral theology comprises in its field of study issues related to pastoral didactics, cultic activity, charitable ministry, apostolate, and evangelization,<sup>1</sup> as well as extensive tasks of educational, cultural, and social character (Przybyłowski 2008, 87-91). Pastoral theology in the narrow sense is situated alongside homiletics, catechetics, liturgy, which have their own material subject matter, formal subject matter and methodology (Kamiński 2005a, 214-223; Kamiński 2005b, 9-20).

---

<sup>1</sup> The essential evangelizing tasks of the Church were defined by Paul VI: “The purpose of evangelization is therefore precisely this interior change, and if it had to be expressed in one sentence the best way of stating it would be to say that the Church evangelizes when she seeks to convert, solely through the divine power of the message she proclaims, both the personal and collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, and the lives and concrete milieu which are theirs” (Paul VI 1975, 18). “Evangelization, as we have said, is a complex process made up of varied elements: the renewal of humanity, witness, explicit proclamation, inner adherence, entry into the community, acceptance of signs, apostolic initiative. These elements may appear to be contradictory, indeed mutually exclusive. In fact they are complementary and mutually enriching. Each one must always be seen in relationship with the others. The value of the last Synod was to have constantly invited us to relate these elements rather than to place them in opposition one to the other, in order to reach a full understanding of the Church’s evangelizing activity” (Paul VI 1975, 24).



In the classical approach, pastoral theology is concerned with the fulfilment of the salvific mission, and, therefore, the Church occupies the central position in its studies. However, throughout its history, pastoral theology developed concepts that, while focusing on the ministry of priests, took clerical forms. A radical change occurred at the Second Vatican Council, especially due to the pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world. All the Council's teaching was pastorally (ministerially) oriented, but it was in this Constitution that the Council Fathers pointed to the richness of the whole Church in its subjective dimension.

Undeniably, it was this conciliar teaching that provided an inspiration for John Paul II, who in his apostolic exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis* formulated a new definition of pastoral, or practical, theology as a scientific reflection on the daily growth of the Church through the power of the Holy Spirit and in the context of history. Pastoral theology here has the status of a full-fledged theological discipline because it draws the principles and criteria of the Church's pastoral activity in history from the faith. "Among these principles and criteria, one that is especially important is that of the evangelical discernment of the socio – cultural and ecclesial situation in which the particular pastoral action has to be carried out" (John Paul II 1992, 57).

Pastoral theology has always relied on up-to-date ecclesiology, so it is understandable that it is open to all systematic theology, but at the same time, in the main lines of its research, it takes into account the "signs of the times" (kairology). Consequently, it draws on the findings of research conducted within other pastoral specialties (liturgy, homiletics, catechetics), and cooperates with secular sciences (Kamiński 2006, 143-163). Pastoral theology has a practical dimension, which involves developing a theory that can be applied in practice.

Thus, pastoral theology is a science dealing with the Church and pastoral care which can only be conducted taking into account the historical context. Pastoral theology which focused on ecclesiology (orthodoxy) (Przybyłowski 2007, 156-169) and on the life and activity of the ecclesial community (orthopractice) (Przybyłowski 2005a, 245-266), did not, however, deal with individual or community experience of faith or with individual or social daily life of Church members in the world, and it is here that a space emerges for a new discipline, i.e., applied theology.

John Paul II was the unquestioned inspirator of applied theology. In his encyclical *Redemptor hominis*, the Pope emphasized the role of man as the route of the Church which lays the foundation for all those ways that the Church must follow, as every man without exception was redeemed by Christ, and with every man without exception Christ is united in some way, even if man does not realize it (John Paul II 1978, 14).

However, the Pope did not indicate a theological discipline that would address the question of man as "the way of the Church" with reference to man who lives in the world and on a daily basis carries out his existential and Christian vocation. Therefore, invoking the *Pastores dabo vobis* exhortation, it seems necessary to study, besides pastoral theology, i.e., practical theology, which is a scientific

reflection on the daily growth of the Church (John Paul II 1992, 57), a specifically defined theological discipline, i.e., applied theology, which will provide a scientific reflection on the daily “growth” of man,<sup>2</sup> who leads his daily life in the world and there fulfils himself and realizes his existential vocation, while Christians build the Kingdom of God.

## 2. THE CHURCH AND THE HUMAN COMMUNITY

The Church is immutable in its essence and as such she was founded by Jesus;<sup>3</sup> At the same time, she constitutes a pilgrim community being “on the way” to the final goal. This thought is very synthetically formulated in catechetical teaching: the Church’s final goal is to enter the Kingdom through the final Passover, in which she will follow her Lord in His Death and Resurrection. Thus, the Kingdom will be fulfilled not by the Church’s historical triumph in accordance with its gradual development, but by God’s victory over the final unleashing of evil, which will cause His Bride to descend from heaven. God’s triumph over the rebellion of evil will take the form of the Final Judgment after the final cosmic upheaval of this world, which is passing away (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1992, 677).

Since the world in which the Church lives and carries out her mission is constantly changing, the formula for her action in the dimension of both salvific functions,<sup>4</sup> as well as complementary (extensive) activities, is variable.<sup>5</sup> The Church is, first and foremostly, a prasadament,<sup>6</sup> which fact captures her original and unchanging essence. Jesus, who enables every person to belong to the Church through baptism, at the same time invites everyone to participate in her life and salvific activity, but at the same time grants man his freedom to pursue his existential vocation.

---

<sup>2</sup> Przybyłowski first approached the issues of pastoral theological reflection on the human person in *Koncepcja antropologiczna teologii pastoralnej* (Przybyłowski 2005b, 234-251).

<sup>3</sup> “The Church does not cease to listen to his words. She rereads them continually. With the greatest devotion she reconstructs every detail of his life. These words are listened to also by non-Christians. (...) ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,’ speaks to people also as Man: it is His life that speaks, His humanity, His fidelity to the truth, His all-embracing love. Furthermore, His death on the Cross speaks—that is to say the inscrutable depth of His suffering and abandonment. The Church never ceases to relive His death on the Cross and His Resurrection, which constitute the content of the Church’s daily life. (...) The Church stays within the sphere of the mystery of the Redemption, which has become the fundamental principle of her life and mission” (John Paul II 1979, 7).

<sup>4</sup> The salvific mission constitutes the realization of the threefold mission and ministry of Christ: prophetic, priestly and royal (Second Vatican Council 1964, 31-36).

<sup>5</sup> “the Church’s consciousness must go with universal openness, in order that all may be able to find in her «the unsearchable riches of Christ» (Eph 3:8) spoken of by the Apostle of the Gentiles. Such openness, organically joined with the awareness of her own nature and certainty of her own truth, of which Christ said: «The word which you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me», is what gives the Church her apostolic, or in other words her missionary, dynamism” (John Paul II 1979, 4).

<sup>6</sup> “The Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race” (Second Vatican Council 1964, 1).

Christians, as members of the Church, are not deprived of their membership and participation in the life of the human community. Being a member of the Church and being a member of the human community are not mutually exclusive; on the contrary: participation in the community of the Church and membership in the human community can complement and mutually enrich each other.<sup>7</sup> This means that the privilege of being in the Church should influence a person's partaking in the human community. Conversely, being a member of the human community should be reflected in belonging to the ecclesial community.

### 3. ECCLESIALITY AND SOCIALIZATION IN PRACTICE

The Church in its divine essence is immutable, because her "essence" is the Person of Jesus. Therefore, the primary task of the Church is to direct human gaze, as well as the consciousness and experience of all mankind, towards the mystery of Christ, to "help all men to be familiar with the profundity of the Redemption taking place in Christ Jesus. At the same time man's deepest sphere is involved – we mean the sphere of human hearts, consciences, and events" (John Paul 1979, 10).

On the other hand, from the human perspective, the Church is a community of Christians who bring into her body their own personal and existential wealth. Jesus makes Himself represented in community with the baptized members of the Church, thus enabling the Church to realize her salvific mission. Representation of Jesus and realization of the salvific mission constitute the Church's immutable essence. On the other hand, the way in which her members make themselves represented and function in the ecclesial community undergoes constant transformation.<sup>8</sup> This, however, is done in full respect for the nature of Christ's salvation, about which St. Ambrose writes as follows: "Behold, I make all things new; and this surpasses even fraternal attachment and love. A brother, born of the

---

<sup>7</sup> The Church encourages the lay faithful to participate personally in public life and to engage in various types of political, economic, social, and legislative activities that organically serve the growth of the common good (John Paul II 1988, 42-43). The lay faithful should take an active part in the proper formation of social life, respecting its legitimate autonomy and cooperating with other citizens in accordance with their competence and responsibility (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 2002, 6).

<sup>8</sup> "As we all know, the Church is deeply rooted in the world. It exists in the world and draws its members from the world. It derives from it a wealth of human culture. It shares its vicissitudes and promotes its prosperity. But we also know that the modern world is in the grip of change and upheaval. It is undergoing developments which are having a profound influence on its outward way of life and habits of thought. The great advances made in science, technology, and social life, and the various currents of philosophical and political thought pervading modern society, are greatly influencing men's opinions and their spiritual and cultural pursuits. The Church itself is being engulfed and shaken by this tidal wave of change, for however much men may be committed to the Church, they are deeply affected by the climate of the world. They run the risk of becoming confused, bewildered and alarmed, and this is a state of affairs which strikes at the very roots of the Church. It drives many people to adopt the most outlandish views. They imagine that the Church should abdicate its proper role and adopt an entirely new and unprecedented mode of existence" (Paul VI 1964, 26).

same mother, cannot save, because he is affected by the same weakness. A man will redeem, but the One about whom it is written: «The Lord will send them a man who will deliver them», the One who said of Himself, «You are trying to kill Me, the man who told you the truth»” (Ambroży 1988, 106-107).

The Church being in her essence the “Mystical Body of Christ” (Pius XII 1943, 193-248), indicates that all her members are one in Jesus Christ, as St. Augustine explicitly put it: “Let us rejoice and give thanks that we have become not only Christians, but Christ. Do you understand, brothers, the grace of Christ our Head? Wonder at it, rejoice: we have become Christ. For if He is the Head, we are the members; He and we form the whole man... the fullness of Christ, therefore; the head and the members. What is the head and the members? Christ and the Church” (Paul VI 1964, 35).

Starting from the very membership in the Church by virtue of baptism, through personal union with Jesus and participation in the realization of the salvific mission to the realization of one’s own Christian and existential vocation, each member of the community manifests his ecclesiality. What, therefore, is it?

#### 4. ECCLESIALITY

Ecclesiality, on the one hand, legitimizes and entitles each member of the Church to enjoy the fruits of Christ’s saving mission, but on the other hand, defines his participation in the life and activities of the Church (Przybyłowski 2016, 93-104). This participation in the community can have both positive and destructive influence on its state, functioning and activities. Ecclesiality, therefore, implies variability within the lives and activities of the members of the ecclesial community, which can, and in some cases even should, be changed (*aggiornamento*). This follows from the fact that the Church, which constitutes a human community and operates according to the rules of social life, can also be studied and defined in the very categories used by sciences dealing with any other forms of human society (John Paul II 1979, 21).

Ecclesiality is thus ontically linked to the ecclesial community, but at the same time it implies the opening of Christians to society. It should be emphasized, however, that apart from “social affiliation”, what is important both for the community of God’s people as a whole as well as for all its individual members, is a special “vocation” (John Paul II 1979, 21). Therefore, the life and activity of the Church (structures, institutions), that is, its missionary dynamism (*ad extra*), while taking into account human history and the various burdens of its history, requires respect for the supernatural essence of the Church (*ad intra*).

The interrelatedness of these two dimensions of the Church’s life and activity in a way compels its members to adopt a “missionary” attitude. It is because the Spirit, who “breathes: where He wills” (cf. Jn 3:8), works in every man, and thus every man deserves respect for what is “in each person” (Jn 2:25), for what that man has already worked out in the depths of his soul in both spiritual and natural sphere. The activities of the modern Church should, therefore, be missionary

in nature, not to overturn anything, but at the same time seek opportunities for cooperation in building the Kingdom of God in the world.<sup>9</sup>

Ecclesiality has yet another dimension – it concerns the relationship of the Church to the human community. The Church and the human community should remain autonomous in their essence, functioning and activities.<sup>10</sup> Church members, on the other hand, have the right to realize their ecclesiality not only in the ecclesial community, but also beyond it, in the human community. This is the basic right of the human person – the right to religious freedom, i.e., the right to be a religious person, and to publicly manifest one's ecclesiality.<sup>11</sup>

## 5. SOCIALIZATION

The human community, unlike the Church, does not have an immutable essence. Members of the human community form an organism that can function properly providing its members respect the basic laws of structure, organization, and social activity, that they respect the equal dignity, and the same personal rights of all members. Thus, socialization should consist in establishing the structure and rules of the community, which can even undergo major changes. At the same time, the fundamental element of socialization should be respect for the dignity and rights of the human person – this cannot be subject to any human authority.<sup>12</sup>

What is the point of convergence between ecclesiality and socialization? Ecclesiality, which is characterized by intra-ecclesial variability (it can be reformed, changed, renewed), can also function properly in the human community, provided that the dignity and rights of each human person be respected. On the other hand, socialization, whose essence consists in respect for the dignity and rights of the human person (an inviolable element) in the life and action of the community, can help Church members to seek ways to improve (“bring up to date”) ecclesiality, that is, those elements of the Church that can be changed. The Church is constantly looking for new ways to discover the richness of her essence, her mission, her

---

<sup>9</sup> “The Second Vatican Council did immense work to form that full and universal awareness by the Church of which Pope Paul VI wrote in his first Encyclical. This awareness-or rather self-awareness-by the Church is formed in a ‘dialogue’; and before this dialogue becomes a conversation, attention must be directed to ‘the other’, that is to say: the person with whom we wish to speak” (John Paul II 1979, 21).

<sup>10</sup> The Church, which by virtue of her salvific mission and its issuing competences, enjoys full autonomy, by no means she identifies herself with the political community and is not associated with any political system (Second Vatican Council 1965, 76).

<sup>11</sup> The Church as a Christian community that lives on the basis of faith as a human community in the world. In a democratic system, such a community enjoys its own independence which the state should respect. The Church and the State, as two distinct and autonomous spheres of social life, should, however, always remain in a mutual relationship (Benedict XVI 2005, 28a).

<sup>12</sup> John XXIII taught that if “socialization” proceeded in accordance with moral principles, its extension would not of itself lead to grave discrimination of individual citizens, nor would it burden them excessively. Socialization can have a positive impact not only on the development and improvement of human values, but also on strengthening the bonds of harmonious coexistence of human society (John XXIII 1961, 67).

mysterious nature, her teachings, and to carry out her mission; at the same time, the Church continues to search new ways to support her members in active participation in community life (Paul 1964, 22).

Ecclesiality and socialization thus allow to maintain the autonomy of the Church and of the human community, while at the same time mobilizing Church and community members to take an active part in the life of both the ecclesial and the human community. Activities within the frames of ecclesiality are coherent with social activities, but they can also be realized independently, provided that the freedom of activities within ecclesiality and the freedom to create the structure and rules of the community with respect for God's law are secured. John Paul II, in his post-synodal exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, warned, however, that today "In many social settings it is easier to be identified as an agnostic than a believer. The impression is given that unbelief is self-explanatory, whereas belief needs a sort of social legitimization which is neither obvious nor taken for granted" (John Paul II 2003, 7).

## 6. BASIC PRINCIPLES OF ECCLESIALITY AND SOCIALIZATION

From the perspective of applied theology, there are three main principles that link ecclesiality and socialization, namely, respect for truth, social justice, and charity.<sup>13</sup> The modern Church in its Magisterium has repeatedly described human condition in the world as being far removed from the objective requirements of the moral order, from the requirements of justice, let alone social love,<sup>14</sup> or respect for the truth.

In their search for and discovery of the truth, Christians should always act in accordance with their own conscience and avoid such compromises which could negatively affect either religion or moral integrity. At the same time, however, they should adopt an attitude of objective benevolence towards the views of others, avoid trying to turn everything to their own advantage, as well as show a willingness to cooperate loyally in the pursuit of what is either intrinsically good or what leads to good by joint efforts (John XXIII 1961, 239).<sup>15</sup>

All members of the Church community partake in the Church's responsibility for God's truth; this includes theologians, but also specialists in various fields,

---

<sup>13</sup> John XXIII devoted the entire fourth chapter of the Encyclical *Mater et Magistra* to the renewal of social relations in truth, justice, and love.

<sup>14</sup> "If we make bold to describe man's situation in the modern world as far removed from the objective demands of the moral order, from the exigencies of justice, and still more from social love, we do so because this is confirmed by the well-known facts and comparisons that have already on various occasions found an echo in the pages of statements by the Popes, the Council and the Synod<sup>103</sup>. Man's situation today is certainly not uniform but marked with numerous differences. These differences have causes in history, but they also have strong ethical effects" (John Paul II 1979, 16).

<sup>15</sup> St. Gregory the Great referring to the subject of teaching the truth, writes: "the knowledge of the presumptuous is characterized by the fact that when they teach, they cannot do it with humility and are unable to convey the truth very well known to them in a credible way. From their speech itself, it is clear that, through their teaching, they consider themselves very high, while they view their disciples as far below, almost in an abyss" (Grzegorz Wielki 1987, 245).

representatives of the natural sciences, humanities, doctors, lawyers, people of art and technology, teachers of various degrees and specialties. By virtue of their participation in the universal (“baptismal”) priesthood, all members of God’s people share in the prophetic mission of Christ by being guided by a reliable reference to the truth in every field, by educating others in the truth and teaching them to mature in love and justice. A sense of responsibility for the truth is one of the fundamental points of the Church’s encounter with every human being, as well as one of the basic requirements that define a person’s vocation in the community of the Church (John Paul II 1979, 19),<sup>16</sup> as well as in social life.

The second important area linking ecclesiality and socialization is social justice. The Church can engage in any activity aimed at justice through reasoned argumentation and the reawakening of spiritual energy. However, a just community cannot be the work of the Church, but it should be realized through politics. Nevertheless, the Church is deeply interested in building social justice by opening people’s minds and will to the demands of the good (Benedict XVI 2005, 28a).

As can be deduced from the history of human society, justice alone does not always suffice, and it can even lead to its own negation if human life in its various dimensions is not shaped by the deeper power of love. After all, it was the historical experience that, among other things, made it possible to formulate the saying: *summum ius, summa iniuria*. This statement does not depreciate justice, neither does it diminish the importance of the order built on it, it only indicates, in another aspect, the need to reach out to the even deeper powers of the spirit that condition the order of justice (John Paul II 1980, 12).

Justice becomes an indispensable factor shaping mutual relationships among people in the spirit of mutual brotherhood and of the deepest respect for all that is human. It is impossible to establish such a bond between people if these relationships are measured by justice alone. In every sphere of interpersonal relations, justice must undergo a kind of thorough “correction” by faith and love (John Paul II 1980, 14).

Thus, from the perspective of applied theology, love is the most important principle of ecclesiality and socialization. Of course, human understanding of love, forms of its realization as well as the experience of love can be both universal in nature and bear the features of far-reaching individualization, because the love of God can turn into rejection of the gift of faith in God’s love, the love of the neighbour can transform into hatred, and self-love into egoism. Positive and

---

<sup>16</sup> “We would like to pay special tribute to those brilliant scholars whose extremely competent works of theological research and exposition, undertaken in exemplary submission to the Church’s teaching authority, have made such an expert and useful contribution to this subject, especially within recent years. They have carried on this work not only in the theological schools, but also in discussions with academicians and intellectuals, in popular writings in defense of the Christian truth, in the spiritual direction of the faithful, and in conversations with our separated brethren. In all this they have presented many and various illustrations of the doctrine on the Church, many of which are quite outstanding and exceptionally useful” (Paul VI 1964, 31).

negative faces of love can appear both in ecclesiality and in socialization: faith – atheism, sacrifice – rejection, generosity – heartlessness, humility – pride.

According to Benedict XVI, the spiritual depth of human life is marked by love, which is “the criterion for the definitive decision about a human life’s worth or lack thereof” (Benedict XVI 2005, 15). Pope Francis, on the other hand, points out that although there are believers who are convinced that their greatness lies in imposing their ideologies on others, in defending the truth with violence, or in powerful displays of force, true social love ultimately makes all people strive for universal communion. No one matures or reaches his fullness in isolation from others, because love has its own dynamics and therefore requires an ever-increasing openness and ability to accept other people. Man is created in such a way that he cannot find his fulfilment, cannot develop, or reach his fullness except “through the sincere gift of himself” (Second Vatican Council 1965, 24). Neither can he achieve an in-depth knowledge of the truth about himself beyond encounters with others: “I commune with myself only insofar as I commune with someone else” (Marcel 1965, 49). This explains why no one can experience the value of life having no concrete faces to love. The Pope concludes that this is the secret of true human existence, because “Life exists where there is bonding, communion, fraternity; and life is stronger than death when it is built on true relationships and bonds of fidelity. On the contrary, there is no life when we claim to be self-sufficient and live as islands: in these attitudes, death prevails” (Franciszek 2019, 32; Francis 2020, 87).

## 7. COEXISTENCE OF ECCLESIALITY AND SOCIALIZATION

Applied theology allows to undertake scientific reflection on ecclesiality without violating pastoral theology’s right to study the Church and its salvific mission. Ecclesiality, however, touches on the very sensitive and at the same time thorny issue of the relationship between priests and the laity. Scientific research on this topic can begin by “defining” the main problems from the perspective of applied theology. The words of the prophet Jeremiah can serve as the point of departure here: “The priests did not say, ‘Where is the Lord?’ Those who handle the law did not know me; the shepherds transgressed against me; the prophets prophesied by Baal and went after things that do not profit” (Jer. 2:8).<sup>17</sup>

This passage from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah foreshadows the changes that occurred in the Chosen People,<sup>18</sup> and which in the same way can also occur in

---

<sup>17</sup> What is meant here are the syncretic tendencies of false prophets who place more hope in foreign gods than in the Lord.

<sup>18</sup> “Thus says the Lord: What wrong did your fathers find in me, that they went far from me, and went after worthlessness, and became worthless? They did not say, «Where is the Lord who brought us up from the land of Egypt, who led us in the wilderness, in a land of deserts and pits, in a land of drought and deep darkness, in a land that none passes through, where no man dwells?» And I brought you into a plentiful land to enjoy its fruits and its good things. But when you came in, you defiled my land and made my heritage an abomination (Jr 2:5-7).



the ecclesial community. It can be assumed, taking into account the whole context of the passage, that the essence of the ecclesial community's existence consists in seeking the Lord: "Where is the Lord?" This task rests first of all with priests, who are called and chosen by God to set the azimuth for the ecclesial community on their way to the Lord. Priests, as well as the whole community, possess the gift of faith, and use the rational knowledge of God, but they should at the same time remain in constant readiness to encounter God in experience.

On the other hand, rational knowledge about God should be gained by the scribes, whose task is to study the message of God's revelation and the Magisterium. The basic condition in such studies is the recognition of faith as the privileged way towards knowing God. However, scribes, by succumbing to the greatness of rational discoveries, may be tempted to substitute "faith" for "knowledge."

Pastors (not only priests, but also people holding various offices and fulfilling various missions and functions) are also called to serve the community, but they are the ones who are vulnerable to pursuing particularistic interests, or even taking actions aimed at personal gain or synecuries of members of various "groups", rather than serving the community as a whole: however, rebellion against God is tantamount to rejecting God's law as the foundation for the functioning of the community.

Finally, prophets, who are supposed to be the guardians of communicating God's truth and sustaining in the members of the community trust in God even in times of difficulty, or in various kinds of adversity. Along with true prophets, there often appear also false prophets, who offer members of the human community concepts of self-salvation and promote substitute ways of living out the true faith in God, and respect for God's law.

If the Church is recognized as the "Mystical Body of Jesus", there is no possibility of building an alternative to it: for there cannot be two "Mystical Bodies" of Jesus. However, there appears here the concept of ecclesiality which is based on the recognition of the truth that God is both the source and the foundation, and that from Him flows the power for man and his life, as well as for the functioning of every kind of community. However, ecclesiality is prone to the effects of original sin, as well as to the drive to absolutize human freedom. This poses serious threats on the plane of the experience of faith on the part of Church members, having moreover a destructive effect on their socialization. This is very clearly revealed in the religiosity of many Church members, who belittle the gift of sacramental salvation and the importance of the Eucharist in the work of mankind's redemption, while at the same time resorting to various forms of falsely understood ecclesiality, in which they see the source of spirituality for themselves.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> "One detail about the passers-by does stand out: they were religious, devoted to the worship of God: a priest and a Levite. This detail should not be overlooked. It shows that belief in God and the worship of God are not enough to ensure that we are actually living in a way pleasing to God. A believer may be untrue to everything that his faith demands of him, and yet think he is close to God and better than others. The guarantee of an authentic openness to God, on the other hand,

When does this happen? It is when people fail to recognize God as the source and foundation of their person and life as well as of the functioning of the community, and instead say that they invite God into their person, their life, and their community. It is therefore necessary here to return to the question posed earlier: "Where is the Lord?". Is He in the person of man, is His true presence in life recognized, and is He truly present in the community? There is only one answer: Christ is truly present in man, in life and in the community, while to invite God to man, life, or community *de facto* means to reject God, to distil Him from all personal and community reality, and to isolate man from God.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

The processes society's secularization are combined with the deepening internal crisis of the Church as well as with the difficulties related with the socio-cultural situation outside the Church. Thus, in conclusion of the conducted scientific reflection, a question can be posed: what can be considered a bigger impediment to the unfettered development and progress of the modern man, who wants to free himself from the burden of God's law – the Church or ecclesiality? The answer is unequivocal: the Church, which no man and nothing that comes from man can change, for even the powers of hell shall not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18).

The most prone to distortion is ecclesiality in which, in addition to purely religious needs, there appears the need to ascribe sense to human life, since an absurd or meaningless existence is difficult to bear for a psycho-cognitively constituted human being (Mandl-Schmidt 2003, 36). Ecclesiality, therefore, in its essence and shape is subjected to various influences, including those that are very dangerous to both man's faith and his individual and social existence in everyday life.

In the perspective of applied theology, the truth about the mystery of the Church reaches beyond the revealed knowledge and the Magisterium. Therefore, applied ecclesiology should embrace the very practice of life, so that the faithful, even before they form a clear idea of this truth, can get to know it, as it were, experientially, in a way that suits their nature. The community of the faithful, in turn, will certainly recognize that they belong to the Mystical Body of Christ when its members realize the fact that the ministry of the Church's hierarchy, by God's command, includes the duty of bringing new Christians into the community, begetting them, teaching them, sanctifying them, and leading them (Paul VI 1974, 37).

Pastoral theology will continue to conduct scientific studies on the life and work of the Church, but a major scientific effort must be made to seek the knowledge about the Church focused on the daily lives of its members. This calls

---

is a way of practicing the faith that helps open our hearts to our brothers and sisters. Saint John Chrysostom expressed this pointedly when he challenged his Christian hearers: «Do you wish to honour the body of the Saviour? Do not despise it when it is naked. Do not honour it in church with silk vestments while outside it is naked and numb with cold.» Paradoxically, those who claim to be unbelievers can sometimes put God's will into practice better than believers" (Francis 2020, 74).

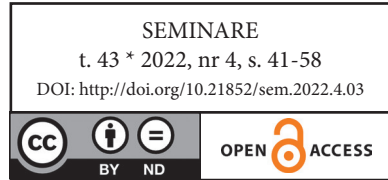
for the study of a new discipline of applied theology focused on man, who is the way of the Church.

Man lives his daily life in the world whose “future is not monochrome; if we are courageous, we can contemplate it in all the variety and diversity of what each individual person has to offer. How much our human family needs to learn to live together in harmony and peace, without all of us having to be the same!” (Francis 2020, 100). At the same time, Pope Francis stresses that in the search for knowledge about the dimensions of human social life, it is necessary to avoid authoritarian and abstract universalism, forced or planned by some and presented as a supposed ideal, aimed at unification, domination, and plunder. There is a model of globalization “which consciously aims at a one-dimensional uniformity and seeks to eliminate all differences and traditions in a superficial quest for unity. (...) If a certain kind of globalization claims to make everyone uniform, to level everyone out, that globalization destroys the rich gifts and uniqueness of each person and each people” (Franciszek 2015, 46). However, this false universalist dream can lead to depriving the world of the diversity of its colours, its beauty, and ultimately its humanity (Francis 2020, 100).

#### REFERENCES:

- Ambroży. 1988. „Z komentarza do Psalmów (Ps 48,13-14).” In *Liturgia Godzin*, vol. 4, 106-107. Poznań: Pallottinum.
- Benedict XVI. 2005. Encyclical *Deus Caritas est*.
- Catechism of the Catholic Church*. 1992.
- Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. 2002. “Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life.” *L'Osservatore Romano* (January 17, 2003): 6-7.
- Francis. 2020. Encyclical *Fratelli tutti*.
- Franciszek. 2015. „Przemówienie podczas spotkania poświęconego wolności religijnej, Filadelfia – Stany Zjednoczone (26 września).” *L'Osservatore Romano, Polish edition* 10 (376): 46.
- Franciszek. 2019. „Anioł Pański (10 listopada).” *L'Osservatore Romano, Polish edition* 12 (418): 32.
- Grzegorz Wielki. 1987. “Z komentarza do Księgi Hioba (księga 23, 23-24).” In *Liturgia Godzin*, vol. 3, 245. Poznań: Pallottinum.
- John Paul II. 1979. Encyclical *Redemptor hominis*.
- John Paul II. 1980. Encyclical *Dives in misericordia*.
- John Paul II. 1988. Apostolic exhortation *Christifideles laici*.
- John Paul II. 1992. Apostolic exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis*.
- John Paul II. 2003. Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*.
- John XXIII. 1961. Encyclical *Mater et Magistra*.
- Kamiński, Ryszard. 1983. “Teologia pastoralna w okresie posoborowym (1965-1982).” *Seminare. Poszukiwania naukowo-pastoralne* 6: 33-64.

- Kamiński, Ryszard. 2005a. „Pojęcie i specyfika teologii pastoralnej.” *Ateneum Kapłańskie* 144-145: 214-223.
- Kamiński, Ryszard. 2005b. „Teologia pastoralna. Istota i zadania.” *Studia Pastoralne* 1: 9-20.
- Kamiński, Ryszard. 2006. „Miejsce teologii pastoralnej w systemie nauk.” *Warszawskie Studia Pastoralne* 3: 143-163.
- Mandl-Schmidt, Iris. 2003. *Biographie – Identität – Glaubenskultur. Zur Entwicklung religiös-spiritueller Identität am Beispiel Thomas Mertons*. Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald.
- Marcel, Gabriel. 1965. *Od sprzeciwu do wezwania*. Translated by Stanisław Łowicki. Warszawa: Pax.
- Paul VI. 1964. Encyclical *Ecclesiam suam*.
- Paul VI. 1975. Apostolic exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*.
- Pius XII. 1943. Encyclical *Mystici Corporis*.
- Przybyłowski, Jan. 2005a. „Działalność Kościoła w świetle teologii pastoralnej i nauk społecznych.” *Kaliskie Studia Teologiczne* 4: 245-266.
- Przybyłowski, Jan. 2005b. „Koncepcja antropologiczna teologii pastoralnej.” *Ateneum Kapłańskie* 144: 234-251.
- Przybyłowski, Jan. 2007. „Eklezjologia pastoralna. Inspiracje z nauczania Kościoła.” *Warszawskie Studia Pastoralne* 6: 156-169.
- Przybyłowski, Jan. 2008. „Kilka refleksji na temat planowania duszpasterskiego. Artykuł dyskusyjny.” *Teologia Praktyczna* 9: 87-91.
- Przybyłowski, Jan. 2016. „Funkcja ludzka w misji pastoralnej Kościoła.” In *Współczesne wyzwania teologii pastoralnej*, edited by Radosław Chałupniak, 93-104. Opole: Redakcja Wydawnictw Wydziału Teologicznego Uniwersytetu Opolskiego.
- Second Vatican Council. 1964. Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*.
- Second Vatican Council. 1965. *Gaudium et Spes*, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World.



REV. WŁADYSŁAW WYSZOWADZKI

The Polish University Abroad in London

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4410-0188> \* e-mail: [w.wyszowadzki@pcmew.org](mailto:w.wyszowadzki@pcmew.org)

Received: 30 Oct 2022; Reviewed: 24 Nov 2022; Accepted: 30 Dec 2022

## THE CHURCH IN THE FACE OF THE CHALLENGES OF THE POST-PANDEMIC ERA

### Abstract

The purpose of the research is to analyze the situation of the Church and pastoral care in the post-pandemic reality. The experience of the 2020-2022 period shows that there has been a strengthening of the faith attitudes of Catholics actively participating in the life of the Church. At the same time, the weaker sides of pastoral care, resulting from confrontation with the media world, have shown themselves. This calls for using the experience of people of science, medicine, bioethics, psychology in the pastoral model. Pastoral activity should also value sacramental pastoral care with the Eucharist at the center. New challenges also face pastoral theology, whose research results can be used to seek new ways of carrying out salvific mission and evangelization.

**Keywords:** coronavirus pandemic, virtual world, online liturgy, Internet pastoral care, pastoral theology

## KOŚCIÓŁ WOBEC WYZWAŃ EPOKI POSTPANDEMICZNEJ

### Abstrakt

Celem badań jest przeanalizowanie sytuacji Kościoła i duszpasterstwa w postpandemicznej rzeczywistości. Doświadczenie okresu 2020-2022 pokazuje, że nastąpiło wzmocnienie postaw wiary katolików czynnie uczestniczących w życiu Kościoła. Jednocześnie pokazały się słabsze strony duszpasterstwa, wynikające z konfrontacji ze światem medialnym. Wymaga to wykorzystania w modelu duszpasterskim doświadczenia ludzi nauki, medycyny, bioetyki, psychologii. W działalności pastoralnej należy również dowartościować duszpasterstwo sakramentalne z Eucharystią w centrum. Nowe wyzwania stoją również przed teologią pastoralną, której wyniki badań mogą zostać wykorzystane do poszukiwania nowych sposobów realizowania misji zbawczej i ewangelizacji.

**Słowa kluczowe:** pandemia koronawirusa, świat wirtualny, liturgia online, duszpasterstwo internetowe, teologia pastoralna

## INTRODUCTION

The Church, although it has consistently carried out the mission given to her by Christ for two thousand years, has constantly faced challenges carried by the tides of history. Wars, schisms, epidemics – these are trials from which the Church has always emerged stronger, although the situations were not immediately depicted brightly. It took time to understand the supernatural and providential work of the Holy Spirit. Certain historical events confronted the Church with intractable challenges and complex questions, the answers to which came at councils, synods and in academic debates. Modern times are not significantly different in the scale of challenges from what the Church has faced in the past. The question that should be asked, however, is – do we have ideas on how to face the next challenge posed by the coronavirus pandemic crisis, and has the Church responded to the challenge as best it could? On the one hand, the situation has unveiled new pastoral opportunities, but also, unfortunately, dangers.

## 1. THE PASTORAL CRISIS OF THE DIGITAL AGE

Much is heard today about the crisis in the Church (Ratzinger 1986; Hildebrandt 2000; Martin 2021; Ratzinger 1992; Kasper and Moltmann 2005; Skrzypczak 2011)<sup>1</sup>. This crisis unfolds into many components – the attrition of the younger generation, apostasy, morality scandals, accusations of a lack of openness to modern ideological thought, or a lack of openness to those of the LGBTQ+ community. It is alleged – perhaps rightly so – that the modern era and the pace of change have left the Church with its thought and teaching far behind. The non-church circles often use slick rhetoric according to which the Church's doctrine, in the face of the progress of civilization, has become outdated in many points and inadequate to the needs and expectations of modern man. The situation of crisis, however, goes far beyond the Church itself and permeates numerous spheres of human life today. An existential crisis, an economic crisis, an energy crisis, a crisis in diplomatic relations between states, or a crisis in the arts are just some examples. Crisis generally permeates modern culture and the world. There is friction inside and outside the Church and strong polemics about her teaching, which some believe should be revised. As always, one can very firmly insist that these and similar opinions are being put forward wrongly, nevertheless, one should consider whether in fact the Church's teaching is still defensible, since faith is increasingly being replaced by "knowledge" and "science." We deliberately put these terms in quotation marks, because according to the tools of sound science, not everything

---

<sup>1</sup> The issue of the crisis of the Church is being addressed by a number of analysts, philosophers and theologians. Also noteworthy is the meeting convened by Pope Francis of the Presidents of Bishops' Conferences from around the world on the crisis of faith and the Church (21-24.02.2019), as well as the study of the topic published in the form of a letter by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI in May 2019.

that is promoted today under the banner of knowledge and science falls into these categories. Indeed, the simplest definition, provided in the Dictionary of the Polish Language, reads as follows:

“[Science is – W.W.] a set of views that constitute a systematized whole and are part of a specific research discipline” (Dictionary).

A broader and more precise definition is given by the Cambridge Dictionary:

“(knowledge from) the careful study of the structure and behavior of the physical world, especially by watching, measuring, and doing experiments, and the development of theories to describe the results of these activities: *pure/applied science, recent developments in science and technology, Space travel is one of the marvels/wonders of modern science*” (Cambridge Dictionary).

The definition in the British source uses several important phrases: “careful study”, “watching”, “measuring”, “doing experiments,” “developments in science.” These indicate the need for empirically measurable, time-spanning, meticulous and careful scientific processes. In the case of the coronavirus pandemic, which we will be looking at in the context of pastoral challenges, certain “scientific” activities seemed to fall short of all the necessary conditions, and in view of this, for this type of “science” a more adequate defining criterion would be one of the classifications found in the PWN Encyclopedia:

“The ideological aspect [of science – W.W.]. The results of scientific research may be used or promoted or suppressed depending on the worldview adhered to by groups with power and influence in society, e.g., fragments of research are presented to the public before they are scientifically verified; some sciences are denied scientific status on the grounds that they are irrational (with a loose understanding of the concept of rationality); such an approach is characteristic especially of totalitarian systems, e.g. Communist ideologues in the Stalinist period undermined the scientific nature of cybernetics and genetics of G.J. Mendel, considered logic, sociology and psychological tests as tools of ideological influence of the bourgeoisie, while they accepted the pseudo-scientific theory of T. Lysenko. At the time, ideological considerations determined the directions and scope of research in many scientific disciplines, especially history, economics, demography, legal studies, religious studies and empirical research” (*PWN Encyclopedia*).

In analyzing the situation of the Church in the post-pandemic era, let us leave aside strictly medical, scientific and pseudo-scientific issues, as well as the final judgment on the quality of the scientific research conducted on vaccination and pandemics – this is not the axis of this study. We will focus on the pastoral and theological aspects that should respond to the unprecedented intra- and extra-ecclesial phenomena that we could witness in a period of several months at the turn of 2020-2022 (*PWN Encyclopedia*).

The fact that the Church's doctrine cannot be changed – especially in the area of dogma and morality – we will not discuss here, since as a *sine qua non* we accept the teachings of Christ and Tradition, strong as a rock for centuries – at least until the 20th century. The second half of the last century and the beginning of the 21st century, as is not difficult to see, seem to be playing with the teaching of Christ. This fact is pointed out by Ralph Martin (Martin 2021):

“The ‘modernist’ controversy rooted in the desire to adapt Revelation to the culture or prevailing philosophical currents that historicize and relativize the whole faith has bubbled to the surface time and again.” Discussion of legitimate notions of “living tradition” or “doctrinal development” can provide an opportunity for these legitimate notions to disguise efforts to depart from tradition or change doctrine (Martin 2021, 41).

Certainly, the cultural phenomena of the 1960s, among them the revolution in morals and later the increased influence of socialist thought especially in the Eastern Bloc countries, as well as the controversial reception of the Vatican Council, gradually influenced a change in human religious sensitivity. However, the real pace of change in attitudes toward God, faith and the Church came with the increasing affluence of societies in the Western world and growing consumerism. Man has apparently begun to believe that everything can ultimately be bought and God is no longer useful for achieving happiness. Even in the minds of many Christians, a dangerous new paradigm has begun to come to the fore, proclaiming that “happiness without God could be attainable.” These beliefs seem to circle back to ancient pagan concepts of thought rooted in the philosophy of Aristippus of Cyrene, or Epicurus of Samos. The doctrine of the hedonists was simple and clear: the only happiness in human life is pleasure, and the consequence of such a thesis in a great simplification is a morality based on the principle – pleasure is good, and pain and what is unpleasant is bad. Hedonistic thought found good ground in positive psychology<sup>2</sup> through Martin Seligman (Seligman 2002; 2011) and has evolved in our time under the influence of complex economic and cultural phenomena into materialistic hedonism, which we would otherwise describe as consumerism. The centrifugal tendencies in the Church toward empiricism, rationalism and hedonism have been further reinforced in our time by genetic engineering, experiments on human embryos, *in vitro* procedures, cosmetic surgery, scientific advances and the redefinition of such values as happiness, love and family. There is no shortage of positive opinions among churchmen on

---

<sup>2</sup> This is known as psychological hedonism, which states that man desires happiness. However, this current does not indicate exactly how a person can achieve this happiness. Seligman points to 3 aspects: pleasure, commitment to action and a sense of meaning from the actions taken in life. According to these assumptions, a person would feel happy. Seligman's concept does not deal with such existential challenges as suffering, incurable illness and death. From a theological perspective, Seligman's concept devalues itself in the face of difficult experiences, referred to as “cross” or “trial,” which shows that a person's happiness lies quite elsewhere.



artificial insemination, women's right to abortion, euthanasia or the blessing of same-sex couples. The Church Pandemic crisis has only solidified the generally shaky religious condition of man, which was not born in an instant under the influence of the pandemic itself. The process of Catholics cooling in their faith and secularizing their views has been going on for a long time, but it certainly does not affect everyone. There are church circles where the faith of individuals is uplifting and inspiring. There are greater doubts in the faith of those who are fed not only the Truth proclaimed from the pulpit, but also other "truths" and half-truths proclaimed from the "pulpit" of the media. So when one talks about the crisis of the Church it is worth pointing out, in addition to the glaring negatives, and the less noticeable at first glance positive aspects, because despite everything the Church continues to bear fruit and her vitality does not expire, she undergoes at most a qualitative change. This means that Christianity has a timeless and imperishable value. The only thing to look for today is new ideas and tools, thanks to which it would be possible to reach even better with the Gospel message to the computerized and desacralized mentality of modern man.

## 2. NEW AGGIORNAMENTO?

Assuming that the core of Catholic morality and dogma must not be violated, one would wonder if there are areas of pastoral practice that could be flexibly adapted to the needs of new times without harming doctrine. Vatican II showed that this is possible and aggiornamento can bear good fruit – as long as its framework is not taken too casually and exceptions to the norm do not become the rule. Some six decades have passed since Vatican II. This is little and much at the same time. The passage of time was probably felt differently by generations born at the beginning of the 20th century, when the pace of technological and scientific advances was much slower compared to what we experience today. The pace of change, for example, in the area of work on artificial intelligence, or in the aforementioned genetic engineering, is so tremendous that one actually has the impression that, except for specialists in these fields and enthusiasts of novelties, most people are somehow lagging behind. Nevertheless, it is in times of this rapid progress that we have come to live. Progress in itself is neither bad nor good. It has no moral value. It acquires it depending on what intention a person gives it. It can lead to destruction, as shown by the capabilities of modern nuclear weapons, but it can also help carry out ever more precise surgical procedures and thus help man recover better. So it is man, not technology, that decides between good and evil. If the modern world does not understand in time that the only hope for our civilization is to return to the formation of human consciences, the consequence not difficult to predict will be a regressive decline of humanity and a return to the primitive behavior inherent in primitive peoples and animals. For without conscience there is no morality, and since there is no morality, there is no right and wrong – and therefore everything is possible and permissible – violence,

war, rape, exploitation, or plunder. In a way, we are already witnessing this fact, observing the current events in Ukraine and elsewhere on the globe, where the only argument in support of force and power is a show of military force. As the Church, we have less and less influence in shaping attitudes and consciences. Additionally, we have found ourselves in a new position during the pandemic. The pressing need of the times in the face of all that we have said so far is to revise pastoral methods. The question arises as to whether the model of pastoral care sketched out in the 1960s by the Council Fathers and after the Council by such charismatic figures as Wojtyła, for example, or Blachnicki, the founder of the Światło-Życie Movement (Paluch 1998; Dziecioł 1996; Brodzki and Wojna 1988), is still in any way compatible with the mentality and needs of man in the digital age, or is it already an obsolete artifact, increasingly less useful and less effective? Perhaps we need to face the question of what this “new evangelization” encouraged by John Paul II should be, and what shape should contemporary pastoral ministry take? Blachnicki’s vision, although growing out of the realities of the Polish Church, correlates in an amazing way with the vision of St. Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer (1902-1975), who launched Opus Dei in Spain in the 1920s (Tourneau 2004). Escriva emphasized the issue of holiness as a universal vocation addressed by God to every Christian – regardless of profession or condition. In doing so, he reversed the erroneous pre-Second Vatican doctrine of clerical and religious circles that the priestly or religious path would lead more effectively to holiness than the lay vocation of a mother or father raising their children with love. St. Josemaria pointed to lay people’s work, professional and family duties as a tool for sanctification in everyday life:

“Do you really want to achieve holiness? – Fulfill the small duties of each moment: do what you should, focused on what you are doing” (Escriva de Balaguer 815).

Both Spanish and Polish work focuses on the in-depth formation of lay people and grounding them in the faith. In their program assumptions, the visions of Escriva and Blachnicki differ both structurally and in terms of formation tools. The goals, however, are similar: *primo* – to form mature circles of lay people who will be able to assist the Church and pastors competently in proclaiming the Good News to the world, *secundo* – to assist people on their path to holiness. While Opus Dei received a unique status from the Church, becoming a personal prelature supported by the popes (John Paul II 1982), the Światło-Życie Movement is unclear why it rather remained a local movement with less apostolic momentum. Perhaps Blachnicki’s vision today would need only minor programming revisions and greater patronage from the hierarchy of the Polish Church in order to rouse the younger generations with renewed vigor? The question remains open. Certainly, however, above all the crises mentioned above is the greatest of all crises – the crisis of holiness, and it is this crisis that is responsible for the scandals occurring in the Church, poor quality pastoral care, the departure of the faithful, or the lack of vocations.

### 3. TENSION BETWEEN FIDES AND RATIO

Although it seems obvious, we need to be reminded from time to time that scientific progress and the achievements of medicine, physics, astronomy have never been treated as threats by the Church. Quite the contrary. It was in the circles of Church universities and monasteries that scientific thought developed, starting from the Anselmian paradigm of *fides quarens intellectum*. From the dawn of the Church's history, faith and reason have been the hallmark of the fact that Christianity is not a magical religion, but a hard-headed one. John Paul II reminded us of this in his encyclical *Fides et ratio* (1998). Invoking the authority of the great scholastics, the Polish Pope encourages us to look to Aquinas' teaching for inspiration in the search for truth. St. Thomas' *Quinque Viae* was to teach the world for many centuries that the Church reads God from the laws of nature and physics. The diad of Fides et Ratio was to protect the teaching of Christ from distortions and the dangerous shifting of emphasis too much on fides or too much on ratio. Neither extreme has ever worked out well for the Church, and it has often had to return to the wisdom of the Aristotelian principle of the golden mean, which says that anything exaggerated to one side or the other moves away from virtue. There has been no shortage of crises in the history of the Church when one of these wings was overexposed.

Consequently, there were such serious crises that they ended in schisms or the perpetuation of heresy. When we look at the phenomena present in the Church today, and exacerbated by the Coronavirus pandemic, we see how the old tension between fides and ratio is once again gaining strength. The tension is so strong that it is beginning to lead to a dangerous polarization of circles extremely far apart within the Church itself. The drama of the separation between faith and reason was already hinted at by John Paul II more than twenty years ago (John Paul II 1998, 45-48). On the one hand, one can see a strong fideistic wing that prefers to see in psychological science, medicine, or virology the tools of the globalists to seize human freedom. In this way, extremely fanatical circles have been strengthened, proclaiming that strong faith is a remedy for everything and, consequently, is also a completely sufficient means of, for example, defeating a coronavirus pandemic. Such a view carries the danger of falling into increasing irrationality and absurd inference, completely detached from Thomas' principle of *gratia supponit naturam*. Pastors and the faithful who profess the absolute primacy of faith over reason seem to forget that God comes to help through man to man. The danger of pastoralism conducted in this way reassures the susceptible faithful that medicine and doctors are a threat or not needed at all, since it is only God who can miraculously heal and protect man from viruses or disease. On the other hand, in the tensions on the level of *fides et ratio*, there is another extreme, equally risky for the Church. This is the arm of pastors and the faithful going to extremes to rationalize certain phenomena. "Rationalists" of the Church, as well

demonstrated by the pandemic crisis, went hand in hand with so-called “science,” which, in the opinion of many commentators, still raised too many controversies and questions to be accepted without reservation. These “pro-science” church circles believed so much in the media narrative and the opinions of “experts” that the word of “scientists” became for a good few months the ultimate determinant for pastoral care, a word clearly more important than the Word of God and the command to *go into all the world and preach the gospel*. The Lord God was thus taken out of the picture for a while, the religious needs of the people suspended by government decrees, the celebration of the sacraments restricted or stopped altogether. Holy water, in accordance with the directives of experts, disappeared from the churches, distances and limits of the faithful were ordered, the liturgy was moved into virtual space, and sacramental communion was replaced by spiritual communion. It has clearly become a disturbing phenomenon that some church circles have paid more attention to health, vaccinations and urging the faithful to avoid social contact than to spreading the hope that comes from faith. The great tragedy for many infected and dying in hospital wards was that they were deprived of the sacraments – including the last confession and viaticum. “Fideists,” as a sign of defiance in the face of such painful situations, ostentatiously violated emergency regulations, eager to prove that faith would protect them from infection. Today we know how many of them were wrong. “Rationalists,” on the other hand, went to the other extreme, excessive conservatism and exaggerated caution at times. What has this experience shown? That, on the one hand, there is in man a very strong need for God, attachment to tradition, respect for the sacred and a spirit of resistance in defense of the highest values. On the other hand, there is a crisis of faith and the placing of physical health as the highest value. Have certain circles of the Church forgotten that more than “food and clothing” (cf. Matthew 6) one should strive for the salvation of the soul and the role of pastoral care is not to enter into dialogue with the world, but to lead people to holiness and salvation? Is it permissible to bracket the teachings of Christ in certain circumstances? It seems that yes. The pandemic and post-pandemic period only sealed a certain direction built up over the years, the motto of which would be Christianity without the cross. There are movements in the Church that are trying to present a vision of a happy, joyful Christianity. The subject of suffering, the cross and illness is taboo in these movements. Are we dealing with some form of Christian hedonism? How else can we explain the huge scale of religious and charismatic happenings, where the main theme is not Christ, but the healing of man from ailments, diseases and suffering, the search for aesthetic sensations – that is, the pursuit of earthly happiness, contentment and essentially pleasure? Where in such a pastoral model is there room for Christ suffering and teaching: “*Whoever wants to follow me, let him take up his cross and follow me*”? Do we really want a Church without a cross, and if without a cross then also without a sacrifice? It is not difficult to understand that such thinking is a road to nowhere. Sadly, the Protestantization of the Catholic

Church is a process that today is blasting it from within in a particularly powerful way through circles fascinated by pentacostal movements. Religious emotional experiences built with appropriately stimulating music and chants seem to mean more than adoring in silence the Lord Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and the Sacraments themselves. What has happened that the emphasis is shifting for us from the Sacrament of Confession and the Eucharist to services of healing of soul and body? The experience of the moment and the stimuli for modern man are more important than the Church's assurance that the sacrament gives everything necessary for salvation. Perhaps this "tuning in" to sensations and experiences are one of the reasons why the move of the liturgy into the virtual space of the Internet has not been much of a problem for so many people. Since the Mass can't provide a strong emotional experience, what difference does it make whether one is in church or watching it through a screen? So, whatever one may say about the attitudes of the radical "fideists" of the pandemic time who fought for the right to participate in the liturgy and sacraments – they undoubtedly gave a bold, though perhaps not always fully reasonable, testimony of faith in the omnipotence of God's power, while the extremely rational attitudes of others exposed a serious crisis of human faith and the placing of too much trust in the authority of "science" and the media. Added to this was the usual human convenience and comfort of not leaving home, blessed by the Church. So here we had a clash of two paths leading to happiness: the path of uncompromising faith in God, firmly rejecting the voice of science, and the path of conformity, hedonism and faith in health – as guarantors of the goal.

#### 4. THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OR THE TELEVISION?

Comparing the trial of faith of the 21st century with other epidemics that happened in Europe in the past, we can easily see that in the past, when health and life were threatened, churches were opened wide, the faithful were gathered by the Blessed Sacrament to place their hope in God. The situation with the coronavirus showed quite the opposite trend. Churches were closed and people were gathered not in front of the Blessed Sacrament, but in front of TV sets to feed them with statistics of infections and deaths. The purpose of our reflection, however, is not to evaluate one or the other position, but rather to ask – what do these experiences teach us? The fact that a significant part of pastoral activities, including liturgical life, has moved into virtual space has shown that the Church can adapt to new conditions in a very malleable way, so there are no grounds for considering modern pastoral work as completely unsuited to the requirements of the modern world. Many church communities, thanks to the zoom platform and Internet connections, were able to maintain ties with each other during the period of isolation, taking advantage of the new opportunity to participate in formation programs. Even the liturgy made available through the YouTube channel could give the faithful

the strength to endure difficult times in isolation – although it was known that the Eucharist reaching homes virtually could never replace a live encounter with God in the temple. Unfortunately, the practice of participating in the Eucharist in front of a TV or computer monitor has been embraced by many people quite enthusiastically as an equally valuable alternative to traditional participation in the liturgy in the temple. Despite the removal of pandemic restrictions, a significant number of people never returned to the Church to experience the Eucharist in the community of the faithful. A recent study conducted at a church of the Polish Catholic Mission in the UK (Wyszowadzki 2022)<sup>3</sup> shows that after the pandemic, some people, depending on their mood or well-being, go to church once, while at other times they follow the Sunday Eucharist online. This generally applies to people over the age of 70, although young people also appeared in the category of people surveyed. The same study showed that nearly 23% of the faithful have permanently disappeared from the church. The reason for this cannot be clearly determined, while it is assumed that there could have been at least two reasons. The first related to the return of Poles from emigration to Poland after years spent abroad. The second reason could be related to a crisis of faith that had been building up for months or even years, with the pandemic becoming a useful catalyst to facilitate a break in ties with the Church. This category of respondents generally includes believers not involved in parish movements, prayer groups or communities. The hope is that while the total faithful of the church surveyed (Local Polish Catholic Mission – London, Balham) has depleted to some extent, parish communities have maintained their vitality and even increased slightly in membership. Some of the parish groups have strengthened in numbers and developed new evangelization or charity initiatives. The balance of the study is thus not as gloomy as one might have assumed at first glance. Certainly, the quality of post-pandemic pastoral care has changed. Those who are lukewarm in faith and undecided have left, while those who are committed and belong to prayer communities have strengthened. This does not change the fact that, generally speaking, we have not yet come to grips as a Church with online celebrations. To some extent, the faithful have lost the ability to discern between live participation in Mass with the reception of the sacrament from virtual participation. Why is this happening? We have already partially answered this question. Perhaps one of the other reasons is the progress of civilization, which has shown and is increasingly proving that life today can successfully proceed simultaneously on two levels – not only in a real way, but also on a virtual level. The two realities now intermingle so much that it is already difficult to distinguish – whether it is more real when people meet in a physical way or when they communicate through social media. The modern generation has become accustomed to both forms becoming the norm. Through online platforms

---

<sup>3</sup> The study used questionnaires and also compared statistics from 2019 and 2022. The number of believers, the number of baptisms, weddings, funerals were compared. Pastoral initiatives from both periods were compared.

we communicate, send letters, talk, learn, study. So why shouldn't the Church function in virtual space? – more than one person will probably ask.

## 5. YOUTH ON THE PERIPHERY OF THE CHURCH

The young generation seems to be the most unsuited to the old form of transmission of the Good News. It is they who are most likely to erase the value of the Church and commit apostasy. A real scourge of recent years is the mass unsubscribing of young people from religious lessons. Following modern trends, of which hedonism, consumerism, materialism, or genderism, the young are discovering that they are more attractive and appealing than the “old-fashioned” teaching of the Church, “stigmatizing the right to pleasure,” “discriminating against people of a different sexual orientation.” The cult of the body, the pursuit of sensation, pleasure, easy and quick solutions are not compatible with the Church's teaching, which sets the standards high. A useful enough pretext for apostasy for many is a publicized moral scandal allegedly perpetrated from time to time by a clergyman or another ridiculous film. However, the most critical problem of the modern Church is the peculiar stagnation of circles, the lack of constructive ideas for new pastoral initiatives or for a newer model of pastoral care that would show the world anew that Christianity has not aged and can still be an attractive prospect for man. This is what John Paul II attempted to do throughout his priestly and then papal life. He repeated to the young to demand from themselves, even if no one demands from them anymore (John Paul II 1983). He focused on direct contact with people, focused on a conversation that could treat God and values in a non-ecclesial space. Hence canoeing with young people, hiking together in the mountains and traveling abroad. This prophetic sign has not yet been fully read by the Church. Wojtyła had an excellent pastoral sense and knew that not only the pulpit, but any other place could be conducive to the proclamation of the Good News, if only pastoral ministry would get rid of its ossified forms and frameworks, which instead of bringing people closer – paradoxically can distance people from God and the Gospel. What a shock to the Roman Curia was the decision of the Polish Pope that the Head of the Church should begin a pilgrimage to peoples scattered on all continents, or the initiative of World Youth Day. The shepherd did not wait for the sheep, but went to them himself – outside the walls of the Vatican, beyond the walls of the temple. The Polish Pope also surrounded himself with the scientific community, using the professional knowledge of doctors.<sup>4</sup> It seems that with the death of John Paul II an era has come to an end, and the great opportunities for the renewal of the Church have dimmed. “Generation JP2” is the fruit of this remarkable pontificate, and it is currently still the driving force of the

---

<sup>4</sup> Among the prominent authorities in the medical field was Dr. Wanda Póltawska, who shared her scientific and practical experience of psychiatric work with John Paul II for a number of years before his election to the See of Peter in 1978, and later during his pontificate.

Church. However, time passes inexorably, and in a dozen years or so, the Church will be led into new times by the generations that are fleeing it today – usually after confirmation. Pope Francis has tried to signal repeatedly that people cannot be expected to come to Christ on their own. Today, the Church's communities, together with their pastors, should consider the challenge of reaching the man who wanders outside the temple walls. Today, the fields of evangelization are to be the periphery of the Church, and if we do not change pastoral programs in time, in two to three decades the Church will no longer have young people completely in the parishes, not to mention priestly and religious vocations, which are falling dramatically from year to year. Perhaps, then, the new virtual space would not be a bad space at all for developing good evangelization and pastoral ideas for young people, if we helped rediscover the imperishable depth and beauty of the Eucharist lived in a spirit of communal union. But the Internet is not everything. It is only a certain pastoral aid. Even technology cannot replace a real encounter, just as it can never replace God.

## 6. HOMES A PLACE OF FORMATION

The pandemic has shown that faith can survive even the most difficult trials, and that the place of sanctification can be not only parish churches, but also Christian homes – so perhaps it would be good to support programs aimed at deepening the spiritual and theological formation of mothers and fathers? Returning to Fr. Blachnicki's tools seems reasonable. Faith is born of listening, and the young generation spends the most important years of growing up in the family home. Home churches should teach and educate the younger generation in the spirit of love and responsibility not only for their family, but also for the fate of the Church. Today we have well-educated people in the churches, the level of religious knowledge is increasing thanks to Bible courses and theological studies that are more easily accessible via the Internet. Nevertheless, the Church should invest even more in the in-depth theological formation of the faithful and the ongoing formation of Christian mothers and fathers. Reversing the emphasis of catechization from children to parents seems to be an idea worthy of in-depth reflection. There also needs to be a better balancing of the spiritual element with the rational element. A pastoral ministry with a stable balance, emphasizing both *fides* and *ratio*, will have an even better chance of meeting the challenges of the coming years. Technological progress does not stop. The lay faithful need more and more professional scientific and theological tools to guard their faith and not be deceived by an atheistic narrative that takes only empirical experience as its starting point. The faithful are ready to accept more difficult layers of knowledge, since we have a better educated society today than in the past. Even in non-urban spaces, higher education is becoming the norm. Therefore, the Church should take care to include bioethical, medical, psychological, sociological and other issues in



pastoral programs. With an expanded scientific perspective, 21st century pastoral care will not be left behind and the faithful will be rid of the fear that faith cannot be confronted with science today. This is not only possible, but necessary.

## 7. THE POWER OF THE MEDIA AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE CROWD

Among the formation methods of the modern people of God, there should be no lack of space for awareness of what are certain psycho- and socio-technical tools by means of which the image of reality in the media and public space is shaped or, more often, even obscured. A Catholic of the 21st century cannot just be an emotional “fideist.” He needs reliable knowledge, and this is the perfect space for a new pastoral ministry. Understanding the world, cultural phenomena, principles and techniques of influencing public opinion – these are now topics that, along with religious content, should be promoted in a very professional manner. The period of the coronavirus pandemic can be an excellent research study for psychologists and sociologists to analyze how the mechanism known as “crowd psychology” and other interesting behavioral mechanisms and reactions to the trauma of the Covid-19 epidemic came into practice (Dlugosz 2021; *Social Theories* 2009; Sztompka 2020; Sztompka 2005; Strong 1990; Le Bon 2009). These phenomena are known not from today and have found a number of scientific studies. There are several interesting aspects that should not escape the attention of the Church – among them, the specific mechanisms that govern a certain human collective under strictly defined conditions. A key role having a not inconsiderable influence on the change of previous human behavior is strong stress and a sense of danger. A person as an individual is able to give up his own system of beliefs and values if he allows himself to be swept away by the emotions of the collective and accepts, if only temporarily, the new rules shared by others as a certainty. By accepting anonymity in a crowd, a person is ready to do more than as an independent individual. This is because in a crowd, personal responsibility is lost and the sense of power that comes from belonging to a group that acts and thinks according to an externally given narrative comes to the fore. Psychology uses the term “collective wisdom” to describe this phenomenon:

“Human thought mostly follows the line of least resistance; human reason often has a tendency to resort to help from others and books when solving problems. In this may be expressed a subtle instinct for the preservation of strength: mental work is connected with the consumption of physiological energy. If, therefore, a person finds himself in conditions of direct assistance in his mental work on the part of the assembly, it may happen that he relies on other, less capable and rational members of the assembly, whether as a result of the above-mentioned inclination or directly from fatigue or other causes” (Wróblewski 1922, 8).

Thus, it is no longer the individual who thinks independently, but it is the crowd that creates collective “wisdom” – even if it contradicts the common sense

and reason of man as an individual. This curious phenomenon is a good example of why the Church's faithful – before the pandemic, not allowing the possibility of not attending the Sunday Eucharist or saying holy water at the entrance to the temple – changed their attitude during the pandemic without much resistance. Following the collective trend of confining themselves to their homes in front of their televisions for a time, they believed that this was the only right solution. Why the only solution? Because that was the only narrative flowing from the media and the mouths of many pastors. The word wove a new reality, and the image completed the whole. “Unbreakable” habits and principles for generations were bent and changed in a single moment, literally. To this day, many churches no longer have holy water at the door although the pandemic has been called off. The role of the media in these processes of psychological and sociological influence is not insignificant. This raises a legitimate concern about whether editors and reporters are still bound by professional ethics today? How much integrity does a media message carry, and how much manipulation and hypocrisy in it? The Church must face the great challenge of communicating the word in the public space. Already the Greek thinkers, in an era when no one dreamed of television or the Internet, understood that the word has a powerful effect and were able to forge a discipline, called rhetoric. The art of rhetoric allowed politicians to influence the masses very effectively. The power of rhetoric is understood by media circles. With words, truth can be turned into falsehood, and something that is an exception to the norm can be established as the norm. Ideologists build on this. This is how all sorts of “-isms” are born in the public and media space: environmentalism, gentrism, etc. An equally powerful stimulus that has a high power of influence is image. The combination of words and images can create a parallel reality to the actual state of affairs. How, then, would the Church defend Christ's teachings in an apparent clash with the world of anti-church media, operating with such skillful tools as word and image? Perhaps by developing an even more resilient independent Catholic media? Or perhaps by simply not entering into polemics with the world, but focusing on Christ in the Blessed Sacrament?

#### 8. REDISCOVER THE VALUE OF SILENCE

The world and the media offer many stimuli, too many perhaps. These stimuli, often drastic, violent bring anxiety, fear, apprehension. The issue of silence and solitude is addressed by Cardinal Sarah:

“In everyday life, the constant flow of news, meetings, and various types of activity constantly suppresses those voices that hide in the depths of the being, and prevents them from rising to the surface of consciousness. They are revealed by silence and solitude” (Sarah 2017, 320).

Sarah's insights are commented on by Stefaniak, noting the ascetic aspect associated with the virtue of silence. Asceticism, in light of everything we have previously hinted at regarding the trends of modern hedonistic-consumptionist culture, seems an abstract term, outdated and unsuited to the spirit of modern times.

“A timely lecture is given by Robert Cardinal Sarach. He shows silence in its external and internal aspects. External silence, is the absence of sounds (cars, airplanes, cell phones). External silence, is also the ‘absence of words.’ However, this is a difficult activity in post-modern society. It can be seen as a weakness. Nowadays, ‘no words,’ is an ascetic exercise. It is an asceticism in the use of the gift of words” (Stefaniak 2018, 69).

Christ offers silence and with silence a rest from the noise that surrounds 21st century man. The task of post-pandemic ministry is undoubtedly to rediscover the treasure of silence and apprehension. The Church today has absorbed much from outside, perhaps too much even. There is a need to silence the many anxieties, news, or confusion. The remedy brings only silence, which is still best understood by some contemplative orders, among them the Carthusians. These communities manage to guard the treasure of silence, thanks to which they are in a sense liberated from worldly influence. Pope Benedict XVI has also said much on the subject. In the papal message for the XLVI World Mass Media Day (2012), we come across important insights:

“In silence we hear and come to know ourselves better, thought is born and deepens... In silence joy, worry, suffering are expressed, and it is in silence that they find a particularly intense form of expression. Thus, from silence is born a more complex communication, requiring sensitivity and the ability to listen, which is an indicator of depth... For this reason, it is necessary to create an appropriate environment, a kind of ‘ecosystem’ in which there would be a balance between silence, words, images and sounds... modern man is often bombarded with answers to questions he has never asked himself, or with needs he does not feel. Silence is valuable because it fosters the necessary distinction between the many stimuli and the many answers we receive, precisely in order to isolate the questions that are truly important and focus on them... in various religious traditions, solitude and silence are privileged spaces that help people find themselves and that Truth that gives meaning to all things... In silent contemplation, the eternal Word, through which the whole world was created, becomes present with greater power, and we become aware of that plan of salvation that God is carrying out through words and gestures throughout human history... the Word and silence. To learn to communicate means to acquire the ability to listen, to contemplate, and not just to speak” (Benedict XVI 2012).

The Church's polemics with the world, and especially its succumbing to the world's noise, has never done the Church any good. St. Peter's boat proved to be strongest when it stood firm on the Gospel and Tradition, resisting the striking

waves of atheism or secularization. From the dawn of the Church's history, the Eucharistic cult was surrounded by special devotion, and its heyday was in the Middle Ages and continues to this day. Many hymns and songs have been preserved from this period, as well as the custom of adoring Christ in the Blessed Sacrament (including *Adoro te devote*, *Tantum Ergo Sacramentum*, *O Sacrum Convivium*, *O Salutaris Hostia*, *Panis Angelicus*, *Ave Verum Corpus* and others). Scholasticism left many theological volumes on the subject (e.g. St. Thomas Aquinas – *Summa Theologiae*), which shows what value the Eucharist has always had and has always had for the Church, and this was also emphasized by later positions of popes, theologians or councils (e.g. Council of Trent, Vatican II). It has also sometimes been the subject of fierce disputes and scientific inquiry. The Eucharist is the living presence of God, who has not and will never leave us orphans. We came out of the pandemic unscathed with the experience of many insights and thoughts. May it bear good fruit. Certainly, the Church must face the challenge of raising the quality of pastoral care and making its forms more flexible. The goal of the formation of the modern faithful should be to balance the spiritual and rational elements in the perception of life and the world. Formation of consciences, but also more specialized retraining of the laity in the current issues of the scientific world and embedding modern knowledge in the perspective of Catholic doctrine is one of the renewed ways of pastoral care. Above all, pastoralists have the task of helping secularized man rediscover the sacred, the beautiful and the value of silence.

## CONCLUSION

To sum up our brief study of the post-pandemic reality, the Church is nevertheless drawn in colors of hope. The experience of the 2020-2022 period has strengthened church circles, reaffirming the faith of those who, prior to the pandemic, did not treat the Church solely in terms of Sunday custom. At the same time, it exposed the weaker points of pastoral care, which, if learned well, can help new forms flourish. Confronting the real power of the media world reveals that the faithful must receive from the Church a more sophisticated intellectual formation, through which the modern churchman will be able to analyze and filter media messages, separating facts from interpretations of facts and manipulation. Shifting the formative emphasis from young children to Christian parents may result, in the nearer future, in raising a generation of very mature and theologically aware young people, who will acquire the tools to build the Church of the future not only in the church, but also at home. Strengthening this pastoral model with a series of meetings with people of science, medicine, bioethics, psychology – can result in the formation of a strong environment of lay people in the Church, whose voice will not be able to be ignored in non-church and secular spaces. A light for the future is what is most precious and imperishable in the Church – that is, the Sacraments – with the Eucharist at the top. Worship of the Blessed Sacrament and an attractive

vision of Christianity – as a rational religion, open to constructive dialogue, willing to draw on the latest advances in science and technology is a wonderful alternative for a world lost in the noise of the media. As the Church, we still have much to offer the world and man. The responsibility to safeguard the great deposit of faith rests perhaps even more firmly on the shoulders of us, the scientific community in the Church, which has a broad understanding of the complexity of the challenges facing the Church. May the experience of the pandemic release many lessons and ideas for a future into which we enter always with Christ – the same yesterday, today and forever.

#### REFERENCES:

- Benedykt XVI. 2012. *Orędzie na XLVI Światowy Dzień Środków Społecznego Przekazu* „Milczenie i słowo drogą ewangelizacji.”
- Brodzki, Krzysztof and Józef Wojna. 1988. *Oazy Ruch Światło-Życie*. Warszawa: „Książka i Wiedza.”
- Cambridge Dictionary*. Accessed by: 22.10.2022. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/science>.
- Długosz, Piotr. 2021. *Trauma pandemii Covid-19 w polskim społeczeństwie*. Warszawa: CeDeWu.
- Dzięcioł, Bogusław. 1996. *Ruch Światło-Życie. Refleksja socjologiczna*. Bydgoszcz. *Encyklopedia PWN*. Accessed by: 22.10.2022. <https://encyklopedia.pwn.pl/haslo/nauka;3946164.html>.
- Escriva de Balaguer, Josemaria. *Droga*. Accessed by: 15.10.2022. <https://www.pismaescrivy.org/book/droga-punkty-815.htm>.
- Hildebrandt, Dietrich von. 2000. *Koń trojański w mieście Boga. Przyczyny kryzysu w Kościele Katolickim*. Translated by Jerzy Wocial. Warszawa: Fronda.
- Jan Paweł II. 1982. *Konstytucja Apostolska „Ut sit.”*
- Jan Paweł II. 1983. *Spotkanie z młodzieżą na Jasnej Górze*.
- Jan Paweł II. 1988. *Encyklika „Fides et Ratio.”*
- Kasper, Walter and Jürgen Moltmann. 2005. *Jezus – tak, Kościół – nie? O chrystologicznych źródłach kryzysu Kościoła*. Translated by Artur Kuć. Kraków: Homini.
- Le Bon, Gustave. 2009. *Psychologia tłumu*. Translated by Bolesław Kaprocki. Kęty: Wydawnictwo Antyk Marek Derewiecki.
- Martin, Ralph. 2021. *Kościół w Kryzysie. Ścieżki wyjścia*. Translated by Zbigniew Przybyłowski. Kraków: AA.
- Paluch, Maria. 1998. *Zarys historii Ruchu Światło-Życie*. Lublin-Kraków.
- Ratzinger, Joseph. 1986. *Raport o stanie wiary (wywiad Vittorio Messori)*. Translated by Zyta Orszyn. Kraków–Warszawa–Struga: Michalineum.
- Ratzinger, Joseph. 1992. *Il nuovo popolo id Dio. Questioni Ecclesiologiche*. Brescia: Queriniana.

- Sarah, Robert. 2017. *Moc milczenia. Przeciw dyktaturze hałasu*. Translated by Agnieszka Kuryś. Wydawnictwo Sióstr Loretanek.
- Seligman, Martin E. P. 2002. *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*. New York: Free Press.
- Seligman, Martin E. P. 2011. *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-being*. New York: Free Press.
- Skrzypczak, Robert. 2011. *Chrześcijanin na rozdrożu. Kryzys w Kościele posoborowym*. Kraków: WAM.
- Słownik Języka Polskiego PWN. Accessed by: 22.10.2022. <https://sjp.pwn.pl/slowniki/nauka.html>.
- Social Theories of Risk and Uncertainty*, edited by Jens Zinn. 2009. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Stefaniak, Łukasz. 2018. „Droga ciszy w głośnym świecie. Camino miejscem odkrywania i porządkowania duchowości człowieka.” In *Duchowość i przestrzeń w kontekście Camino de Santiago*, edited by Piotr Roszak, Franciszek Mróz and Łukasz Mróz, 61-72. Accessed by: 15.10.2022. [https://depot.ceon.pl/bitstream/handle/123456789/19283/Stefaniak\\_Droga%20ciszy%20w%20g%C5%82o%C5%9Bnym%20C5%9Bwiecie.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://depot.ceon.pl/bitstream/handle/123456789/19283/Stefaniak_Droga%20ciszy%20w%20g%C5%82o%C5%9Bnym%20C5%9Bwiecie.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).
- Strong, Philip. 1990. “Epidemic Psychology: a model.” *Sociology of Health & Illness* 12(3): 249-259.
- Sztompka, Piotr. 2005. *Socjologia zmian społecznych*. Translated by Jacek Konieczny. Kraków: Znak.
- Sztompka, Piotr. 2020. *Słownik socjologiczny. 1000 pojęć*. Kraków: Znak.
- Tourneau, Dominique le. 2004. *Czym jest Opus Dei?* Translated by Gustaw Kania. Warszawa: IW PAX.
- Wróblewski, Bronisław. 1922. *Przestępstwa tłumu*. Wilno: Skład Główny Nauczycielstwa Polskiego w Wilnie.
- Wyszowadzki, Władysław. 2022. *Badania nad stanem duszpasterstwa Polskiej Misji Katolickiej w Londynie Balham w okresie po pandemii koronawirusa*.

SEMINARE

t. 43 \* 2022, nr 4, s. 59-69

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.21852/sem.2022.4.04>



PIOTR WALEWSKI

University of Gdańsk

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9546-274X> \* [religia@ug.edu.pl](mailto:religia@ug.edu.pl)

Received: 8 Nov 2022; Reviewed: 1 Dec 2022; Accepted: 30 Dec 2022

## RACISM IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY IN THE LIGHT OF CHURCH TEACHING. DISCUSSION OF THE MOST IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS AND A NEW INTERPRETATION OF THE PHENOMENON

### Abstract

The paper undertakes the topic of racism and its moral evaluation by the Church's Magisterium. It begins with an inductive study which consists in a lexical analysis of selected texts of the Church's Magisterium and papal encyclicals aimed at tracing the topics of race and racism. The study has shown that although not numerous, the documents addressing this issue are very significant. The paper additionally reviews selected definitions of racism. Finally, the author makes an attempt to interpret the phenomenon of racism and provides a theological proposal to overcome this problem in a theoretical and definitional sense. The article is a contribution to further research and exploration.

**Keywords:** Church's Magisterium, racism, antisemitism, John Paul II, popes

RASIZM XX WIEKU W ŚWIETLE NAUKI KOŚCIOŁA.  
OMÓWIENIE NAJWAŻNIEJSZYCH DEFINICJI ORAZ NOWA INTERPRETACJA ZJAWISKA

### Abstrakt

W artykule podjęto temat rasizmu i jego oceny moralnej przez Magisterium Kościoła. Najpierw zastosowano badanie indukcyjne, polegające na leksykalnym prześledzeniu wybranych tekstów Magisterium Kościoła oraz encyklik papieskich w poszukiwaniu tematyki dotyczącej rasy i rasizmu. Okazało się, że nie ma wielu dokumentów podejmujących tę kwestię, ale są one znaczące. Przejrzano także niektóre definicje dotyczące rasizmu. Na koniec podjęto próbę interpretacji zjawiska oraz przedstawiono teologiczną propozycję przezwyciężenia tego problemu, przynajmniej w sensie teoretycznym i definicyjnym. Artykuł jest przyczynkiem do dalszych badań i poszukiwań.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Magisterium Kościoła, rasizm, antysemityzm, Jan Paweł II, papież

## INTRODUCTION

Racism is one of the concepts that are commonly known and referred to colloquially in everyday conversations, which makes it even more necessary to clarify its meaning and find out what people mean when they talk and think about *racism*. It must be said that not all wrong and stigmatizing human behaviour that bears the hallmarks of social injustice and discrimination can be defined as racism *sensu stricte*.

From the theoretical point of view, racism is an ideology and such attitudes of man that originate from the hatred of the *Other* based on skin colour or origin (Garaguso 1976, 1028-1034). Secular institutions and organizations may vary in their approach to this concept and use different definitions of it than churches or religious associations. In the dictionary of the Polish Language, we read that *racism* is “a view based on the thesis of biological, social and intellectual inequality of human races, usually combined with the belief in the inherent superiority of a particular race, often recognizing its right to rule over others” (“Rasizm” 1996, 19). Similar thoughts are expressed in the Catholic encyclopaedia by A. Jabłoński, where it is stated that racism is “a set of views based on a pseudoscientific thesis about the inequality of human races, striving to justify it on the basis of studies and the findings of anthropological, psychological, sociological and genetic research” (Jabłoński 2012, 1213).

K. Korab, on the other hand, refers to it as an unsubstantiated theory assuming that there are “better and worse human races” (Korab 2003, 413). The European Union, in turn, uses a broader definition, adding to the above-mentioned elements also language, religion and nationality. It must be emphasized, however, that, for methodological purposes, this definition should not be unduly expanded to include all types of discrimination occurring in societies in racism. Racism was officially condemned in 1948 by the UN General Assembly, and then, in the 1960s, by UNESCO, but further conferences and declarations were still needed in the following decades, and thus in 1993 the third decade of combating racism was proclaimed, as the previously set goals had not been achieved.

In the 19th century, the first theoretician of racism was J.A. de Gobineau (1853), a French count, diplomat, ethnologist and politician who wrote about the purity of the race dividing them into white, black and yellow. It is also worth mentioning in this respect H.S. Chamberlain (1899), a German philosopher and ideologue of Pan-Germanism, of British descent, who had a significant influence on Nazism, and who dealt with ideas of racism in his works. Knowing history and wishing to make it a “Teacher of life”, we realize more and more clearly that some concepts and theories developed by philosophers and humanists were irresponsible and wrong from the moment they were formulated, and not just when they were used by others. The Pontifical Commission “Iustitia et Pax” states with reference to this phenomenon: “racial prejudice, in the strict sense of the



word – that is, awareness of the biologically determined superiority of one's own race or ethnic group with respect to others – developed above all from the practice of colonization and slavery at the dawn of the modern era” (Pontifical Justice and Peace Commission 1988, 2). Those theories exerted an influence on people in a variety of ways to find their dramatic manifestation in the 20th century, a century to which John Paul II referred later as a period in history when “a worldview was created in the name of which a man can take the life of another man because he is of a different race because he belongs to a given ethnic group, because he is Jewish, because he is Gypsy, because he is Polish” (John Paul II 1991, 5).

In the light of the above, it should be noted that although various concepts of man have been proposed in the past (economic, existential, sexual being, “being leaning towards death”), it seems worth reconsidering the Christian concept of man, long-known in Europe and in the world. The fundamental value and social idea in the mentality of people should be personal dignity of a human being, who, quoting H. Skorowski, “is a biunity of the bodily and spiritual elements. Man understood in this way surpasses the entire surrounding reality” (Skorowski 1999, 23). Only in relation to man can we talk about his unique value. Only in relation to man can we talk about dignity. This notion carries axiological implications. It provides the foundation for human rights (cf. Skorowski 1999. 23-34). The state and every community within which a person exists should protect human rights and create conditions for the implementation of those rights (cf. Skorowski 2015, 320-321). This normative basis can never be the result of either a social contract or any power or ideology. Human rights are inherent to each individual person and their existence does not depend on a conception or establishment by other man, authority or society. Human dignity is linked to freedom and justice. Whenever this fundamental knowledge about man was dismissed, people succumbed to a more or less distorted vision of humanity born by subsequent ideologies. It should be emphasized that neither personal dignity nor the rights resulting from it are relative. In Europe and in the world, long forgotten are the words of St. Paul (first a Jew, a Roman citizen educated in the Greek world, and finally, a Christian who became the citizen of the world): “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28). It should also be recalled that “the Church, sent to all peoples of every time and place, is not bound exclusively and indissolubly to any race or nation” (PCC 58).

#### 1. YESTERDAY AND TODAY OR EXAMPLES OF RACISM IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (SELECTION)

Racial discrimination in North America: the term “colored” with designating black-only spaces (e.g., black-only water points). Mass exterminations of the population of some nations: the Armenian genocide in 1915-1917 in the Ottoman Empire; Nazi crimes during World War II against Jews, Poles, Roma; The

Vietnamese and Cham people genocide during the rule of the Khmer Rouge in the 1970s; Apartheid in South Africa until the mid-1990s.

An example of racism on the largest scale was the ideology of Nazism (which made it its program for the National Socialist totalitarian party in Germany) leading to the tragedy of the *Shoah* (i.e., extermination of the Jews which is called *holocaust* in Greek, however, as the term seems inappropriate, the Hebrew term *shoah*<sup>1</sup> is used here). Anti-Semitism certainly stems from racism, but it should be emphasized that not all anti-Jewish behaviours in the history of the world and the Church can be identified as anti-Semitism (anti-Judaism and anti-Jewishness should also be distinguished, since, as much as they are reprehensible from the ethical point of view, they are not *strictly* racism and have other etiology).

The Holy Office of the Catholic Church condemned anti-Semitism already in 1928, while Pope Pius XI, condemned Nazi doctrines in 1937 in the encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* (it was read on Passion Sunday on March 14, 1937, in churches in Germany). The encyclical contains, among others, the following statements: “None but superficial minds could stumble into concepts of a national God, of a national religion; or attempt to lock within the frontiers of a single people, within the narrow limits of a single race (...). The peak of the revelation as reached in the Gospel of Christ is final and permanent. It knows no retouches by human hand; it admits no substitutes or arbitrary alternatives such as certain leaders pretend to draw from the so-called myth of race and blood” (Pius XI 1937, 15-23). It is interesting to note that the same pope began work on an encyclical that pointed to the unity of the human race as the sufficient, the first and the main argument against racism and anti-Semitism<sup>1</sup>. Pius XI spoke out against racism in many of his meetings. During one of them he said: “Catholic means universal, non-racist and non-nationalist! (...) The human race, the entire human race, is one great universal human race! We ask why, by unfortunate imitation, Italy had to follow the example of Germany? (...) Human reality and human dignity demand one big family, the human species, the human race (...) It is only there that multiple differences occur. (...) This is the answer of the Church!” (Pontifical Justice and Peace Commission 1988, 7).

Moreover, it should be noted that racial divisions can function in an ambiguous way. In Africa (Rwanda – 1990s), people were both victims and perpetrators of racism (Galtung 2014, 119f). Races or nations persecuted in the past may, under certain conditions, become the authors of new racist behaviour. In an extremely dramatic way, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger asked: “how was this possible? How is it possible that in Rwanda, the coexistence of *hutu* and *tutsi* tribes suddenly turned into mutual bloody conflict? (...) the cynicism of ideology has darkened consciences” (Ratzinger 2005, 87). C.M. Swain, disagrees with the theory that only

---

<sup>1</sup> This encyclical was not completed due to the Pope’s death. The circumstances of its origin were described in a book by Suchecky and Passelecq (1995). For more on the subject, see Horoszewicz (1998, 179-201).

white people can be racist, and refutes the notion that a member of a minority cannot be racist (Swain 2002).

Bearing in mind proper methodology (as not everything is *strictly* racism), it is also necessary to identify and eliminate racist or discriminatory behaviour during public gatherings, e.g., in stadiums during matches, marches, demonstrations, etc. Sometimes there are no simple solutions or easy answers. The situation in contemporary ghettos of great European capitals seems complicated when city dwellers are afraid to enter them. John Paul II called on Catholics to help immigrants and show solidarity with them, but at the same time he appealed to immigrants “to recognize the duty to honour the countries which receive them and to respect the laws, culture and traditions of the people who have welcomed them” (John Paul II 2003, 4).

It should be emphasized that in the past, racist attitudes were sanctioned by legal provisions, and not, for example, by doctrines or rules of any religion known to us. In 1935, the “Nuremberg Race Laws” were passed in the Third Reich, which concerned Jews, Roma and the “black race”. Contrary to the diplomatic efforts of Pius XI, the Italian state spectacularly received Hitler in Rome in 1938, and then legislative attempts were made to transfer anti-Semitic ideas to Italy<sup>2</sup>. In South Africa, in 1950, the Census Act was passed, dividing society into “whites, blacks and people of colour”. Prior to this, in 1949, mixed marriages were banned. In subsequent years, further segregating laws were introduced in South Africa, while the so-called Jim Crow laws imposed in the US deepened racial segregation and, consequently, racial segregation continued in some states despite the abolition of slavery. These are only selected examples.

The 1968 UN Convention includes racism among “Crimes against humanity” and prohibits the statute of limitations for such crimes. Unfortunately, as the Second Vatican Council noted, even today “Differences crop up too between races and between various kinds of social orders” (PCC 8). “The Church admonishes her own sons, but also humanity as a whole, to overcome all strife between nations and race in this family spirit of God’s children” (PCC 42).

In an extremely insightful and interesting way, John Paul II in the apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* wrote: “Despite the modern civilization of the ‘global village’, in Africa as elsewhere in the world the spirit of dialogue, peace and reconciliation is far from dwelling in the hearts of everyone. Wars, conflicts and racist and xenophobic attitudes still play too large a role in the world of human relations” (John Paul II 1995a, 79). The Pope will repeat this thought on the 30th Anniversary of the Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* in 1995, saying: “Unfortunately, ethnic and religious hatred, fuelled by the memory of the tribal and national past, continues to trigger conflicts, genocide and slaughter, and leads to all the

---

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the famous Race Manifesto of July 14, 1938 (quoted after Podemski 2012, 108). This author, for the sake of accuracy, claims that this is another argument in support of the thesis of the ‘African’ rather than ‘anti-Semitic’ origin of state racism. Only later, in 1943, did the issue in Italy change.

tragic consequences that are associated with such painful events, such as famine, epidemics and millions of refugees. It is time for the appeal of the Council to be heard” (DPCP 8)

The latest European Commission document states: “Discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin is forbidden in the European Union (EU). However, such discrimination still exists in our society. It is not enough to be against racism. We must actively oppose it” (European Commission 2020). John Paul II appealed to the media that in today’s world it is they who bear the greatest responsibility in creating “a public opinion of constantly growing strength in favour of peace, and of what serves to bring it about and preserve it” (John Paul II 1986, 3). He also repeatedly appealed to parents and teachers to “combat racism and xenophobia by inculcating positive attitudes based on Catholic social doctrine” (John Paul II 2003, 3).

## 2. UNEQUIVOCAL MORAL EVALUATION OF RACISM BY THE MAGISTERIUM OF THE CHURCH

As regards the question of racism, documents of the Magisterium of the Church or statements of popes on this subject seem rather scarce (compared to the great social topics addressed in numerous texts and official documents). It seems, in fact, obvious considering the unequivocal moral evaluation of this phenomenon as well as the significance of both documents and statements directly addressing this subject.

The Second Vatican Council, in addition to the *aggiornamento* of the contemporary Church and the great theological themes, also dealt with many social problems. The authors, called the Council Fathers, raised these issues in many documents and undertook their moral evaluation. When it comes to racism, the question is discussed in a broader context that is worth quoting. In the constitution *Gaudium et Spes*<sup>3</sup> of the Second Vatican Council, we read: “Although the world of today has a very vivid awareness of its unity and of how one man depends on another in needful solidarity, it is most grievously torn into opposing camps by conflicting forces. For political, social, economic, racial and ideological disputes still continue bitterly, and with them the peril of a war which would reduce everything to ashes. True, there is a growing exchange of ideas, but the very words by which key concepts are expressed take on quite different meanings in diverse ideological systems. Finally, man painstakingly searches for a better world, without a corresponding spiritual advancement” (PCC 4). It is significant that these words, written more than half a century ago, seem to accurately describe the world today. Pope Francis wrote in his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*<sup>4</sup>, that racism is

<sup>3</sup> It is known that Karol Wojtyła, as a cardinal, participated in the work of the subcommittee preparing this constitution and that his texts that had been published earlier were used.

<sup>4</sup> The encyclical was written in the 21st century, but we deliberately go beyond the framework of the title of the article to show that the problem of racism did not disappear with the end of the 20th century, and that is why Pope Francis’ encyclical mentions it.

“a virus that quickly mutates and, instead of disappearing, goes into hiding, and lurks in waiting” (Francis 2020, 97). These words are known to the wider public because of a tweet in which Pope Francis repeated the phrase on the occasion of the International Day Against Racism, adding that “our supposed social progress is not as real or definitive as we think” (@Pontifex March 21, 2021).

Equality among people results from the fact of their being created by One God, therefore any divisions are unacceptable and stand in conflict with the faith of Christians. As H. Skorowski said: “The basis for the right to equality is the very nature of each person, the nature that comes from and is sanctified by God” (Skorowski 1999, 57). This equality results from the dignity of each person because it is through this dignity that all people have the same rights.

In 1987, John Paul II wrote with great firmness: “On the *international level*, that is, the level of relations between States or, in present-day usage, between the different ‘worlds,’ there must be complete *respect* for the identity of each people, with its own historical and cultural characteristics. It is likewise essential, as the Encyclical *Populorum Progressio* already asked, to recognize each people’s equal right ‘to be seated at the table of the common banquet,’ instead of lying outside the door like Lazarus, while ‘the dogs come and lick his sores’ (cf. Luke 16:21). Both peoples and individuals must enjoy the fundamental equality which is the basis, for example, of the Charter of the United Nations Organization: the equality which is the basis of the right of all to share in the process of full development” (John Paul II 1987, 33).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: “Every form of social or cultural discrimination in fundamental personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, colour, social condition, language or religion, must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God’s design” (CCC 1935)<sup>5</sup>. The Church’s position on racism is clear. Racism is incompatible with the teaching of the Church on the common origin of all people and the unity of the human race. Moreover, Baptism makes believers members of the Body of Christ, thus transcending “all the natural or human limits of nations, cultures, races and sexes” (CCC 1267).

In the Declaration of the Second Vatican Council on the relationship of the Church to non-Christian religions “*Nostra aetate*” the words of the Bible are recalled: “The one who does not love does not know God” (1 John 4:8) and the conclusion: “No foundation therefore remains for any theory or practice that leads to discrimination between man and man or people and people, so far as their human dignity and the rights flowing from it are concerned. The Church reproves, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against men or harassment of them because of their race, colour” (NAe 5). In another document of Vatican II, it is said that the right to education cannot be limited on account of race (GE 1), and Christians are to earnestly strive “for fundamental decisions to be taken in

---

<sup>5</sup> The Catechism of the Catholic Church repeated here the words of the Second Vatican Council (PCC 29).

economic and political affairs, both on the national and international level” serving all people, regardless of “race, sex, nation, religion or social condition” (PCC 60).

It is significant that the teaching of the Church equates the situation of racial worship and exaltation with idolatry (CCC 2113). It seems that it is not possible to go further in condemning racism using religious language.

In the teaching of the Catholic Church, a very important, but almost absent from public awareness, is the document *The Church Against Racism* (Pontifical Justice and Peace Commission 1988), and in particular its chapter entitled “Contribution of Christian, in Union with Others, to Promoting Fraternity and Solidarity Among Races.” It contains very interesting observations and suggestions that can serve as guidance in reflection on the concept of racism. John Paul II in 1987, during a meeting with African Americans, said: “There is no black Church, no white Church, no American Church; but there is and must be, in the Church of Jesus, a place for blacks, whites, Americans, for members of every race and culture” (quoted after Kłos-Skrzypczak 2019, 87). And in the Message for the World Day of Migrants, he taught: “This is the Church’s missionary path: to go to meet women and men of every race, tongue and nation with friendship and love, sharing their conditions in an evangelical spirit, to break the bread of truth and charity for them” (John Paul II 1997a, 4).

#### CONCLUSIONS, SUMMARY AND “REMEDY” PROPOSAL

1. Racism, as other important concepts, has never been and still is not a monolith, so one should always pay attention to the context of its occurrence, its causes and effects. It is also necessary to study the evolution of this concept analysing it through historical accounts, since racism is a global, not only a local phenomenon.

2. Racism is a concept about which there is still no consensus in science as regards its definition, although it must certainly be evaluated unequivocally and defined as an unacceptable and reprehensible phenomenon. There can be no doubt about it, no justifying circumstances. Ethically or religiously, racism is always wrong.

3. The position of the Church’s Magisterium on racism is unequivocal. Throughout the centuries, racism has always been condemned by subsequent popes in their statements and writings. *Fundamental equality* among people, resulting from the inherent dignity of man is one of the fundamental motives which make the Church invariably oppose every form of racism.

4. In the past, racist attitudes were sanctioned by legal provisions and not, for example, by the doctrine or rules of any religions known to us.

5. Racial divisions can function in an ambiguous way.

From the point of view of the Catholic Church, racism is caused by ideological reasons, but also by sin, which is in a symbolic and descriptive way already presented in the Hebrew Bible in the episode about Cain and Abel. The fact that the three great monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam, refer to

this sacred text significantly shows that racism can be born in the human heart<sup>6</sup>. This heart is the space where the battle between good and evil takes place. “In his heart, man is sensitive to the absolute values of good, to justice, brotherhood and peace. The disorder of the heart is notably the disorder of the conscience when the latter calls good or bad what it intends to choose for the satisfaction of its material interests or its desire for power” (John Paul II, 1984, 2). Presented in this way, the problem seems to go to the heart of the discussion on the causes of racism. The human conscience can become erroneous and it can be shaped by racial prejudices (unfortunately also supported by the so-called pseudoscientific theories). In 1997, in the Message for World Migration Day the pope wrote that “thanks to the sending of the Holy Spirit, ‘the first disciples of Christ – regardless of language differences – were able to find the royal way of peace and brotherhood’. At the Tower of Babel, pride destroyed the unity of the human family. The Holy Spirit came to restore this lost unity with His gifts” (John Paul II, 1997b, 6).

Thus, remembering and respecting the teaching of John Paul II and examining the Magisterium of the Church, we can conclude with the following proposal. A new heart (mind), and thus a proper perception of man and a new spirit (awakened and strengthened by the Holy Spirit) may become, in our opinion, a *recipe* for the complicated problems of human coexistence on this planet, where racism should never again have a place in the space of thoughts and actions.

#### REFERENCES:

- Catechism of the Catholic Church*. 2019. Second Edition. Revised in accordance with the official Latin text promulgated by Pope John Paul II. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Accessed on 07.11.2022. <https://www.usccb.org/sites/default/files/flipbooks/catechism/VI/>.
- Chamberlain, Houston Stewart. 1899/1912. *Die Grundlagen des XIX. Jahrhunderts*. X Auflage. München: Verlangsanstalt F. Bruckmann A.-G. Accessed on 07.11.2022. <https://ia600306.us.archive.org/32/items/Chamerlain-Die-Grundlagen-des-19-Jahrhunderts-1-und-2/ChamberlainHoustonStewart-DieGrundlagenDes19.Jahrhunderts-IUndIi19121258S..pdf>.
- Francis. 2020. *Encyclical Letter Fratelli Tutti of the Holy Father Francis on Fraternity and Social Friendship*. Accessed on 07.11.2022. [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20201003\\_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html).
- Francis. 2021. @ Pontifex 21 March 2021. Accessed on 07.11.2022.
- Galtung, Johan. 2014. *Affrontare il conflitto: trascendere e trasformare* (Scienze per la Pace). Pisa: Pisa University Press.

---

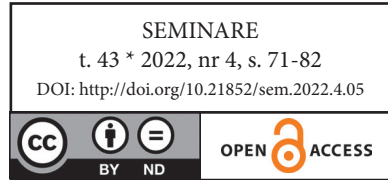
<sup>6</sup> In biblical language, the Hebrew ‘lev’ i.e., heart means primarily the seat of thought.

- Garaguso, Pietro. 1976. "Razza." In *Dizionario di sociologia*, edited by Franco Demarchi and Aldo Ellena, 1028-1034. Cinisello Balsamo: Edizioni Paoline.
- de Gobineau, Joseph Arthur. 1853. *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*. Paris: Librairie de firmin Didit Freres.
- Horoszewicz, Michał. 1998. "Nieurzeczywistniona encyklika Piusa XI." In "Ja jestem Józef brat wasz". *Fs. H.J. Muszyński*, edited by Waldemar Chrostowski. 179-201. Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza „Vocatio”.
- Jabłoński, Arkadiusz. 2012. "Rasizm." In *Encyklopedia katolicka*, vol. 16, 1213. Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego Jana Pawła II.
- John Paul II. 1984. *Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the celebration of the World Day of Peace*, 1 January 1984. Accessed on: 07.11.2022. [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_mes\\_19831208\\_xvii-world-day-for-peace.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19831208_xvii-world-day-for-peace.html).
- John Paul II. 1986. *Message of The Holy Father John Paul II for the 20th World Communications Day*, 11 May 1986. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- John Paul II. 1987. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis. To the Bishops, Priests Religious Families, sons and daughters of the Church and all people of good will for the twentieth anniversary of Populorum Progressio*. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- John Paul II. 1991. *Przemówienie Ojca Świętego podczas IV pielgrzymki do Ojczyzny*. Accessed on: 07.11.2020. [https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/jan\\_pawel\\_ii/homilie/28wloclawek\\_07061991.html](https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WP/jan_pawel_ii/homilie/28wloclawek_07061991.html).
- John Paul II. 1995a. *Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Africa of the Holy Father John Paul II to the Bishops Priests and Deacons Men and Women Religious and All the Lay Faithful on the Church in Africa and Its Evangelizing Mission towards the Year 2000*. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- John Paul II. 1995b. *Discorso di Giovanni Paolo II nel XXX Anniversario della Proclamazione della Costituzione Pastorale "Gaudium et Spes" (DPCP)*. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- John Paul II. 1997a. *Message of Pope John Paul II for World Migration Day*, 1997. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- John Paul II. 1997b. *Message for World Migration Day*, 9 November 1997. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- John Paul II. 2003. *Message of The Holy Father John Paul II for the 89th World Day of Migrants and Refugees*. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- Kłós-Skrzypczak, Aleksandra. 2019. "Specyfika form i praktyk religijnych społeczności afroamerykańskiej wyzwaniem pastoralnym dla amerykańskiego Kościoła katolickiego." *Teologia i Moralność* 25: 79-94.
- Komisja Europejska. 2020. *Komunikat Komisji do Parlamentu Europejskiego Komitetu ekonomiczno-społecznego i Komitetu regionów. Unia równości: Unijny plan działania przeciwko rasizmowi na lata 2020-2025, Bruksela, dnia 18.09.2020 r.*



- Korab, Kazimierz. 2003. "Rasizm." In *Encyklopedia nauczania społecznego Jana Pawła II*, edited by Andrzej Zwoliński, 413-415. Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne.
- Pius XI. 1937. *Mit brennender Sorge*, English text. Accessed on: 07.01.2022. [https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_14031937\\_mit-brennender-sorge.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_14031937_mit-brennender-sorge.html).
- Podemski, Piotr. 2012. "Faszyzm włoski wobec kwestii żydowskiej 1919-1938." *Studia nad Autorytaryzmem i Totalitaryzmem* 34/1: 81-109.
- Pontifical Justice and Peace Commission. 1988. "The Church and Racism: Toward a More Fraternal Society." *The Catholic Lawyer* 32/4: 273-300.
- „Rasizm." In *Słownik Języka Polskiego PWN*, edited by Mieczysław Szymczak, vol. 3, 19. 1996. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.
- Ratzinger, Joseph. 2005. *Europa. Jej podwaliny dzisiaj i jutro*. Translated by Stanisław Czerwik. Kielce: Wydawnictwo Jedność.
- Second Vatican Council. 1965a. *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World "Gaudium et Spes" (PCC)*. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- Second Vatican Council. 1965b. *Declaration on Christian Education "Gravissimus Educationis" (GE)*. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- Second Vatican Council. 1965c. *Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions "Nostra aetate" (NAe)*. Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- Skorowski, Henryk. 1999. *Problematyka praw człowieka*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo UKSW.
- Skorowski, Henryk. 2015. *Katolicka nauka społeczna. Wobec aksjologicznych dylematów współczesnego świata*. Warszawa.
- Suchecky, Bernard and Passelecq Georges. 1995. *L'encyclique cachée de Pie XI*. Paris: La Decouverte.
- Swain, Carol M. 2002. *The New White Nationalism in America. Its challenge to integration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.





REV. WOJCIECH MUELLER

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1354-7190> \* wojciech.mueller@wp.pl

Received: 13 Nov 2022; Reviewed: 16 Dec 2022; Accepted: 30 Dec 2022

## HEROISM OF THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES: FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE IN THE LIGHT OF THE BEATIFICATION PROCESS OF THE SERVANT OF GOD, REV. ALEKSANDER WOŻNY

Abstract

The aim of this study is to present the heroic character of theological virtues in the light of the beatification process of Rev. Aleksander Woźny, launched on January 25, 2014 in the Archdiocese of Poznań. The whole *Positio super vita, virtutibus et fama sanctitatis. Posnanesis beatificationis et canonisationis Servi Dei Alexandri Woźny sacerdotis dioecesiani (1910-1983)* was elaborated to provide an objective judgment of theological consultants, and subsequently, of the ordinary congregation of cardinals and bishops of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints. The wealth of available sources concerning the candidate for the altars in the form of his teaching, letters and memories allowed to pose the question whether in the life and teaching of Rev. Aleksander Woźny, the practice of faith, hope and love towards God and towards one's neighbour was proven to be heroic, and therefore whether it is possible to form an opinion about the sanctity of the Servant of God.

This study presents the theological virtues that the Servant of God excelled in in his life. The above research problem was elaborated on the basis of substantive study and thorough analysis of the collected documentation, which is reflected in this article.

**Keywords:** beatification process, theological virtues, heroic virtues, faith, hope and love

HEROICZNOŚĆ CNÓT TEOLOGALNYCH: WIARY, NADZIEI I MIŁOŚCI  
W ŚWIETLE PROCESU BEATYFIKACYJNEGO SŁUGI BOŻEGO KS. ALEKSANDRA WOŻNEGO

Abstrakt

Celem niniejszego opracowania jest ukazanie heroiczności cnót teologalnych w świetle procesu beatyfikacyjnego ks. Aleksandra Woźnego, rozpoczętego 25 stycznia 2014 r. w Archidiecezji Poznańskiej. Cała *Positio super vita, virtutibus et fama sanctitatis. Posnanesis beatificationis et canonisationis Servi Dei Alexandri Woźny sacerdotis dioecesiani (1910-1983)* została tak opracowana, by mogła wystarczyć do wyrobienia obiektywnego sądu konsultorom teologom, a następnie kongregacji zwyczajnej kardynałów i biskupów Dykasterii Spraw Kanonizacyjnych. Bogactwo dostępnych źródeł

dotyczących kandydata na ołtarze w postaci jego nauczania, listów i wspomnień pozwoliło postawić pytanie czy w życiu i nauczaniu ks. Aleksandra Woźnego udowodniono praktykowanie wiary, nadziei i miłości tak w stosunku do Boga, jak i do bliźniego w stopniu heroicznym i czy w związku z tym można sformułować opinię o świętości Sługi Bożego?

W niniejszym studium zostały przedstawione cnoty teologalne, którymi Sługa Boży żył w stopniu ponadprzeciętnym. Powyższe zagadnienie badawcze zostało opracowane na podstawie merytorycznego pogłębienia i analizy zebranej dokumentacji, znajdującej swoje odzwierciedlenie w niniejszym artykule.

**Słowa kluczowe:** proces beatyfikacyjny, cnoty teologalne, heroicznosc cnot, wiara, nadzieja i miłość

## INTRODUCTION

Among the many candidates for the glory of the altars of the Archdiocese of Poznań special attention is due to the beatification process of Rev. Aleksander Woźny, currently in the Roman phase. On February 1, 2022, a congress of theological consultants was held at the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, during which a discussion was initiated on the outstanding practice of virtues by the Servant of God. All gathered theologians pronounced affirmative, accepting the collected material, and their opinions published in *Relatio et vota Congressus peculiaris* and in *Positio super vita, virtutibus et fama sanctitatis. Posnaniensis beatificationis et canonisationis Servi Dei Alexandri Woźny sacerdotis dioecesiani (1910-1983)* provided grounds for discussion for cardinals and bishops, including the archbishop's secretary, at the ordinary meeting of the Dicastery on November 8, 2022.

The beatification case of Rev. Aleksander Woźny was presented at the Ordinary Congregation of Cardinals and Bishops by the so-called *ponens*, previously appointed by the Ordinary Congress. The Relator of the Cause was a Polish cardinal, Stanisław Ryłko. All participants of the Congregation unanimously pronounced *affirmative*. This means that the practice of virtues in the life Rev. Aleksander Woźny was marked by outstanding heroicity and in this respect the Servant of God is a model for other people, both priests and laymen. Rev. Aleksander Woźny practiced the virtues with joy, even when faced by difficult living conditions, and many people who knew him emphasized that he excelled in this respect among ordinary Christians.

Particularly noteworthy are the theological virtues which the Servant of God practiced in his life in an outstanding degree. Although the study on the sainthood of the candidate for the altars included also cardinal and related virtues, the present paper focuses on the three of them: faith, hope and love. Rev. Aleksander Woźny attained true heroicity in practicing those virtues showing that spiritual life is a dialogue in which the initiative always belongs to God, and that human contribution consists mainly in responding to Him through an act of faith, hope and love (Gogola 2003, 159). Theological virtues played a fundamental role in the life of Rev. Aleksander Woźny. They shaped and stimulated his moral activity. The dynamics of the virtues that were deeply inscribed in his life experiences, was

constantly enriched by a life of prayer and sacramental ministry, which became indicators of his spiritual maturity.

During the diocesan investigation a rich legacy of documents relating to the candidate for sainthood was collected. Those included: his non-printed writings and publications, as well as authentic and reliable materials, both handwritten and printed, gathered in the Archives of the parish of St. Jan Kanty in Poznań at Grunwaldzka 86, as well as in the Archdiocesan Archives in Poznań in Ostrów Tumski and in collections of Poznań libraries, which comprise articles published in manifold magazines. The abundance of available sources concerning the candidate for sainthood in the form of his teachings, letters and memoirs justifies reflection on the theological virtues practiced by Rev. Aleksander Woźny in the light of the Roman phase of the beatification process and allows to pose a question about his outstanding heroicity in the practice of the theological virtues: faith, hope and love towards God and neighbour in his life and teaching, and thus justify the opinion of his sanctity (*Congregatio de Causis Sanctorum* 1983).

## 2. HEROIC FAITH OF REV. ALEKSANDER WOŹNY

Faith is a theological virtue by which we believe in God and in all that He has said and revealed and that the Church proposes for belief. By faith, “man freely entrusts himself to God” (*Konstytucja* 1967, 5) and strives to know and do His will (cf. *Katechizm* 1994, 1814). Faith “without works is dead” (*James* 2:26), and all love for God must be founded on it.

In view of the above, it can be claimed that Rev. Woźny manifested an extraordinary ability to practice the faith and to seek ways to share it with those entrusted to his pastoral care. Both his parishioners and priests who collaborated with him as vicars gave a special testimony about him in this respect. From among all Christian virtues, it was faith that the Servant of God practiced to the highest degree. He was ready to die for his faith. In faith, he greatly exceeded ordinary Christians. The witnesses called in the beatification process unanimously stated that in his practice of faith Rev. Woźny stood out for his firmness, perseverance and dignity.

Thanks to the Christian upbringing received in his family home, he took over from his parents many practices of faith, which he later followed in his priestly life. Deep faith and trust in God’s goodness and love enabled Rev. Woźny to devote himself even more to God. This became the basic feature of spirituality, which he developed during his seminary days (*Mueller* 2017, 149), and at the same time gave the Servant of God the conviction that the Creator entrusted him with a supernatural environment to educate him, to bestow on him His graces and inspirations (*Woźny* 2009, 34). It was thanks to his deep faith, rooted in prayer, liturgy and the sacraments that he was able to persevere with God in the face of persecution. A period of life specially marked

by suffering was his stay in the German concentration camps in Buchenwald and Dachau (*Listy* 2016). That is where he experienced the truth that nothing happens without God's will, which further strengthened his conviction that one must trust the Almighty in everything and accept all experiences with childlike trust. In this attitude he always imitated Christ, meek and humble, martyred and risen. He was rewarded by God for the years of torment and torture spent in captivity with the grace of imitating the poor and humiliated Master. Letters written by Rev. Woźny during his imprisonment in Dachau to his relatives, provide testimony to his deep faith. In a letter of February 6, 1944, he wrote: "there is One who sees everything, who is the source of all love and is Himself justice" (*Listy* 2016, 342). On April 2, 1944, he once again gave evidence of his great faith in the face of the fifth year of the war: "I want to take it all like a little child from God's hands" (*Listy* 2016, 366).

Several years spent in Nazi concentration camps did not destroy his wonderful joy, kindness and patience. When recalling the years of painful mistreatment, he never showed any bitterness, never shaded his heart with a shadow of resentment towards his *persecutors*, nor did he allow to be deprived of his deeply rooted love for God and neighbour. Whenever he spoke about the years of inhuman torment and torture, he only listed countless acts of goodness, nobility and brotherhood, as well as examples of people helping and rescuing one another in prison (Stuligrosz 1994, 70). The year 1950, after his return to Poland, proved to be exceptionally difficult, marked by many a painful experience in his life. The reason was the bishops' letter on the liquidation of the Catholic organization (Caritas), which the contemporary authorities did not agree to be read in public. Rev. Woźny recounted the content of letter during his sermon (Stuligrosz 1993, 4). Even though he did not read the letter, he was arrested the next day on the basis of a decree on particularly dangerous crimes during the period of state reconstruction and was imprisoned for nine months - from February 13, 1950 to December 1, 1950 at Młyńska in Poznań (Pytel 1994, 8).

After leaving prison, Rev. Woźny, leading others to God, built a close, intimate relationship with Him himself. "Spiritual childhood" became an essential element of his interior life as a path leading to communion with God. This also expressed his personal striving for holiness, both in life and in teaching. He especially cherished the "little way" of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, who became an apostle of love and a witness to the theological assertion that only love leads to holiness (Aumann 1993, 310). During World War II, when he was imprisoned in the German concentration camp in Dachau, in one of his letters he asked his family for "The Story of a Soul" (Kubiak 1999, 143). The book survived the turmoil of war, and he kept it in his library for the rest of his life. Teaching himself and others the "little way" became his trademark: childlike faith and an extremely trusting attitude towards every human being (Kuklińska 2010, 71). All this also affected the teaching of Rev. Woźny, in which he showed faith as a "dark" light that does not give the obvious knowledge of God but is nevertheless a light that allows man to

know Him through love. The possible difficulty of experiencing faith, according to him, was that the Creator's love on earth is as if in darkness, one cannot see the One you love (Woźny 2006a, 31).

This spirituality became for the Servant of God a certain universal style, not reserved for a narrow group of people, but one that can and even should characterize every believer who submits himself to God's will, constantly asks God about His will and plans for himself in the spirit of humility, openness to God's will, entrusting himself to the Mother of God and imitating Christ.

### 3. HEROIC HOPE

Apart from faith, the life of Rev. Woźny was also marked by Christian hope understood as a gift from God offered in the perspective of eternity. Hope played a fundamental role in the life of the Servant of God, epitomizing the pursuit of happiness placed by God in his heart (Tischner 1984, 190). This hope, which finds its source in God, gave him the assurance that whatever good he did on earth, will be given back to him by God in heaven as due honour and recognition (Woźny 2005, 14).

In his reflections, Rev. Woźny often referred to hope that emerges with the help of God's love, and which encounters great difficulty in man in the form of the desire for union with God, that cannot be experienced on earth (Woźny 2006a, 33). The Servant of God learned hope from an early age. The death of his mother when he was 12 years old was a painful experience. However, he did not break down, did not fall into despair, but allowed himself to be guided by the grace of his priestly vocation (Mueller 2017, 31).

Rev. Woźny invariably rested his hope in God's goodness and in the effectiveness of Christ's Passion. He believed that thanks to God's mercy he would not lose the sanctifying grace, but persevere to the end, and that God would provide him with the strength to fulfil it and encourage him to do good in order to reach heaven at the very end (Woźny 2006a, 32-33). When he was a student in the seminary in Gniezno, on October 26, 1929, he wrote down in his diary words that manifested his great hope: "Thus, I will renounce earthly goods – I will consider God my only good. Only in Him is the hope, He will one day be my «very great reward». (...) Lord, You see me now. You make me think of these words. All my hope is in You!" (*Pamiętnik* 1929, Meditation XX).

Such an understanding of Christian hope also helped Rev. Woźny to overcome afflictions and expect true real comfort. It was only through hope that he was able to overcome various kinds of obstacles in his inner life, in relation to his fellow men, in matters resulting from human imperfection, misery or inclination to sin. The letters from Dachau that he wrote to his relatives give testimony to this hope (*Listy* 2016, 454).

When, after the end of World War II, Rev. Woźny returned to Poznań, his pastoral care was characterized by sacrifice, the posture of service and love as well

as of “spiritual childhood”. This was evident in his giving up his own comforts, in seeking the good of others rather than his own, as well as in asceticism. The Servant of God often lay prostrate all night, praying for sinners. He was not driven by ambition, nor did he take credit for himself, seeing God’s work in everything. He never spared money for the decoration of the church and always cared for worthy celebration of God’s worship. He also zealously collected funds to build a new church. He cared for the poor, although he did it very discreetly, without seeking public fame (Kubiak 1998, 71-72). He also willingly shared all his possessions (Kondratowicz 1984, 6). He knew that he should overcome himself through good deeds, which he often emphasized in his teaching, pointing to various symptoms of self-love ingrained in all people and depriving them of their ability to love God and neighbour. Attachments to clothing, housing, everyday objects, spiritual goods, and recognition may come to light any time (Woźny 2005, 33-35). It can be claimed that Rev. Woźny was free of such attachments. He sustained others in hope, assuring that God wants man’s happiness (*List* 1973).

Hope regarding the ways of achieving salvation was present in the whole life of Rev. Aleksander Woźny. It was combined with faith in God’s Providence, so as to form one with it (Benedykt XVI 2007, 35, 46). Hope helped him overcome himself. He believed that there often arises in man an illusion when man is assured that he has already reached God and that he can love Him with his own strength and power (Woźny 2006a, 34-38). Therefore, in his teaching, Rev. Woźny often emphasized that hope also makes it possible for man to overcome all temptations that come from the evil spirit, from people, or from human inclinations or those that have been allowed by God (Woźny 2006a, 34-38). He preached that the Creator wants man to love Him more and do more out of love for Him, and thus persevere in true joy. Rev. Woźny noticed, however, that overcoming temptations through hope allows man to rise higher in love for God and confirms the belief that God will give sufficient grace to overcome them (Woźny 2006a, 34-38).

A special place for the formation of the faithful, in this respect, was the confessional. Rev. Woźny waited for penitents every day from very early hours of the morning (Węclawski 2010, 51). Sometimes he himself opened the church around five o’clock and went to the confessional (Kwaśna 2010, 97). Sometimes people from outside of Poznań came to confession early in the morning. During the day, he could be seen in the confessional at different times, even when the church was completely empty. He heard confessions until late at night. Very often he seemed to have been guided by some inner inspiration and went to church in the middle of the night, and even then, he would meet someone who wanted to confess (Wistuba 1987, 7). He invariably kept the confession hours. If he was leaving somewhere, he took great care to return on time (Wistuba 1987, 7). It was important to him not to disappoint the penitents. Rev. Woźny approached the sacrament of penance very seriously and taught his penitents the same attitude, encouraging them to combine this sacrament with regular spiritual direction



(Kubiak 1998, 51-52). For this purpose, he introduced special teachings on inner life, delivered every third Sunday of the month, which was a rare way of providing spiritual direction (Kwańska 2010, 97). Written down by his listeners, years later his teachings were published in a book titled: "Bóg jest najważniejszy" [God is most important] (Pytel 1994, 10).

During confession he was understanding and patient. He listened to long confessions of penitents, sometimes defending them, without, however, justifying sin. At times, confessions would be paused by moments of long silence. The words uttered afterwards often reached the core of the discussed problem (Kubiak 1990, 84). He never bothered about long lines to the confessional and never rushed confessions because of a large number of penitents. "With the power of his priesthood, he restored human and Christian dignity of some penitents and, put up a ladder of perfection for others so that they could climb upwards" (Pytel 1994, 8). The person confessing at the moment was the most important for him. However, he was at the same time a demanding confessor who disliked half-heartedness (Kubiak 1990, 82). Some people left his confessional disappointed, although later they returned and agreed with him, ready to accept the demands previously deemed too difficult. Undoubtedly, the prayer of Rev. Woźny for penitents, his mortifications or fasts played an important role here (Drapikowska 2010, 107). These were often specific apostolic acts (Wistuba 1984, 146-147). To enable regular confession of penitents from remote places, he visited them in person several times a year. He heard confessions of people from various parts of Poland (Wistuba 1987, 7). Rev. Woźny was also a valued confessor of seminarians at the Archbishop's Theological Seminary in Poznań, who cared for priestly vocations (Stroba 1983, 3348). He held this position until his death (Kubiak 1998, 63).

As a spiritual director who experienced, even stronger than other priests, the influence of the evil spirit (Raczkowski 2010, 33), he helped "in disentangling himself from the trap of weakness and delusions of self-love and led to an ever more complete union with God" (Pawlaczyk 1985, 34). Hence, many penitents became convinced that the church of St. Jan Kanty was a place of special work of Divine Mercy, because confession allowed them to experience an encounter with Christ, to whom the priest, as a zealous confessor, lent both his ear and his mouth, himself remaining hidden (Kubiak 1990, 83).

#### 4. HEROIC LOVE OF GOD AND NEIGHBOUR

Apart from faith and hope, the virtue of love crowning all the previous virtues and uniting him with God as a supernatural goal was also distinctly present in the life of Rev. Woźny (Gogola 2003, 181). Love became his greatest desire, directed primarily to God, in order to love Him limitlessly, selflessly and purely (Woźny 2005, 18), and above all things (Woźny 2006b, 99). The love of God and the fulfilment of His will became the most important goal of the Servant of God's

life, despite the various difficulties he encountered (Woźny 1966, 242). He first learned to love God in his family home. God's Providence made him grow up in a large, pious family of a rural teacher, where a living faith, healthy piety and God's holy law flourished (Mueller 2017, 23-27). The principles of Christian life, which Aleksander's parents followed in their home, as well as very his careful upbringing, laid the foundation for heroic practice of virtues. Later, when he was already a seminarian, both in Gniezno and Poznań, he made the chapel the central place of his formation by participating in the Eucharist, meditation, during the Liturgy of the Hours, services, days of recollection and retreats (before tonsure and ordination), as well as in moments of personal prayer, in which he entrusted God with various intentions (Mueller 2017, 63-66).

In this sense, true love became for the Servant of God, foremostly a priestly zeal. This is evidenced by years of his service as a vicar, and above all, by the opinions of parish priests who emphasized his pastoral zeal (*Opinia* 1936; *Opinia* 1938). After World War II, in one of his reflections, he pointed out that only the love of God and people for God's sake, rooted in strong hope, can overcome sadness and bring joy despite suffering (Woźny 2006b, 31). In the life of the Servant of God, love for God was something real, and not a distant or unrealistic goal. Such an understanding of love became the source of the charism in the life and ministry of Rev. Woźny, who wanted to lead as many people as possible to an intimate relationship with God. He was motivated by a concern not only for their salvation, but, directly, for their holiness. He fulfilled this mission, primarily, in relation to the lay members in his parish community, but the areas of his activity extended much further. He devoted his time, attention and strength to people from outside the parish of St. Jan Kanty who came to listen or to confess to him. In the path of spiritual childhood that he followed, he manifested the truth that there is only one Christian love, although there are two subjects of it: God and another man. Thus, for the Servant of God, the true love of neighbour was one with the love of God (Woźny 2006b, 102).

For Rev. Woźny, true love meant the ability to forgive others from the bottom of one's heart, to get rid of jealousy and to love one's enemies (Woźny 1968, 217). Purification of love was of high importance to him. In this acquiescence to accept everything, he allowed for situations when his neighbours paid him with ingratitude or despised the good that he showed, or when his actions did not bring the expected results (Woźny 1998, 149). He understood the love of enemies as the purest love of God because it reflected his inner zeal (Woźny 2006b, 102) and gratitude (Woźny 2001, 30). Such openness to God's will helped him overcome any traces of spiritual laziness or discouragement (Woźny 2006b, 96). It also enabled him to forgive and love enemies. It strengthened his belief that God planted in him a source of good, from which he could endlessly give to others (Woźny 1972, 156). Love understood in this way was for him not a weakness or submission to others, but foremostly a reasonable demand on the part of people entitled to it. It was the kind of love that purified him, released him from egoism, expanded in his soul the place for

God, made him capable of accepting true love, and finally freed him from self-love (Woźny 1998, 118). The main desire of Rev. Woźny was to become a tool in God's hands, to renounce himself and to agree that God will use him according to His will.

Testimonies collected in the beatification process confirm the Servant of God's great charisma of care for others. The called witnesses not only gave many examples of good happening thanks to him, and confirmed that he loved people, but also that he suffered because of the fact that Christ is not known, that the fruits of his passion are not used, because of evil that cannot be stopped and because of the fact that many souls go to perdition (Woźny 2006a, 118). For this reason, Rev. Woźny believed that God is looking for people capable of sacrificial love, because in them He feels good and safe, and this is the basis of great happiness (Woźny 1998, 102). Therefore, the virtue of love towards others was also manifested by Rev. Woźny in strengthening it in people for whom he became a spiritual father and for whom he felt exceptionally responsible. All this meant that the love of God and the other man affected the whole of his priestly service and conditioned the main principle of giving everything to God, according to the words that the love of God without love of neighbour is incomplete (Woźny 2000, 108). This conviction was also displayed in specific life situations towards those in need. He asked people he trusted to offer their sufferings, intentions and prayers for others in various difficulties (*List* 1966).

The multitude of examples and testimonies on this subject provide ample justification for perceiving Rev. Woźny not only as a man of deep faith and hope, but also as a hero of love towards the smallest, the weakest and the neediest. Love of neighbour was the foundation of his spiritual life, accompanied by full awareness that the initiative of love comes solely from God. The duty of a Christian, resulting from baptism, is to respond to this love and life with God through faith and hope, so that He becomes the highest good and happiness that will ultimately be continued in heaven. In his response to this love, Rev. Woźny manifested true heroism.

## CONCLUSION

Theological virtues: faith, hope and love, presented in this study on the example of the life of Rev. Aleksander Woźny justify his fame of sanctity, which was noticeable not only during his life, but also after his death and, despite the passage of years, is constantly maintained and noticeable. It was his outstanding practice of virtues that made his priestly ministry exceptional, and after his death gave rise to the desire to include the Servant of God among the blessed of the Church. The abundance of available sources concerning the candidate for sainthood in the form of his teachings, letters and memoirs, non-printed writings and publications, as well as authentic and reliable materials about him, provide base for a renewed reflection on the practice of theological virtues by Rev. Aleksander Woźny in the light of the Roman phase of the beatification process and answer the question posed at the beginning of this paper.

Throughout his life, Rev. Woźny manifested an extraordinary ability to practice the faith. Deep trust in God's goodness and love enabled him to give himself even more fully to the Creator by subordinating to Him his mind and will. This became an essential feature of his spirituality. It was through his deep faith and being rooted in prayer that he was able to persevere with God in the face of persecution and never betray Christian ideals. He shared his faith in various ways to those entrusted to his pastoral care, above all through the sacraments, which were the fundamental and most effective means of sanctification of the faithful and their progress in interior life.

Christian hope was present in the whole life of Rev. Woźny and in all his priestly work, starting from his childhood, through the years of the seminary. He wanted to be one with God, and the heroic hope, next to faith, was for him God's gift offered in the perspective of eternity. For this reason, he viewed all his difficult experiences through the prism of hope, and in his sufferings he was at all times accompanied by the thought of the glory that God intended for those who love Him. Hope helped him overcome self-seeking, self-love as well as all temptations. He sustained people in hope and strengthened it in others. It was from hope that he derived his attitude to material things. He lived a very modest life and never gathered anything.

Heroic love pervaded the entire ministry of Rev. Woźny as a priest, whether at the pulpit, in the confessional or at the altar, having a significant impact on the shape of the entire parish, which he transformed into one praying and apostolic Family of God's Children. He made that Family alive with God's spirit. Many initiatives of the Servant of God, his attitude of service, the Eucharistic life developed in the parish, as well as the introduced services gave the parish of St. Jan Kanty in Poznań a special spiritual character. He himself became a spiritual father, enjoying universal respect, trust and love. He was a good shepherd of the flock entrusted to him by Christ, whose essence of life was to love God and man above all things.

All these three virtues provide grounds for the conclusion that Rev. Woźny was a man who partook in God's nature through faith, hope and love. Those virtues that relate directly to God, preparing the believer to live in unity with the Holy Trinity, were for him a gift from the Creator. As he himself wrote: "We believe in God, we hope in God, we love God" (Woźny 2000, 89). Thus, the Roman phase of the beatification process only confirms the rightness of the case taken by the Archdiocese of Poznań to raise Rev. Aleksander Woźny to the glory of the altars. It also provides an answer to the question posed here that in the life and teaching of the Servant of God were present the theological virtues: faith, hope and love towards both God and neighbour, and that in this particular matter and aspect he enjoyed the opinion of holiness, which was confirmed by the bodies of the Vatican Dicastery for the Causes of Saints: Congress of Theological Consultors of February 1, 2022 and Ordinary Congregation of Cardinals and Bishops of November 8, 2022.

## REFERENCES:

- Aumann, Jordan. 1993. *Zarys historii duchowości*. Kielce: Wydawnictwo Jedność.
- Benedykt XVI. 2007. *Encyklika „Spe salvi.”*
- Congregatio de Causis Sanctorum. 1983. *Regolamento della Congregazione per le Cause dei Santi*.
- Drapikowska, Barbara. 2010. “Był jak Ojciec...”. In *Z wszystkich zrobić świętych... W stulecie urodzin ks. Aleksandra Woźnego (1910-1983)*, edited by Anita Magowska, 107-109. Poznań: Wydawnictwo “Kontekst”.
- Gogoła, Jerzy. 2003. *Teologia komunii z Bogiem*. Kraków.
- Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego*. 1994. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Pallottinum.
- Kondratowicz, Stefan. 1984. “Kapłan posoborowy. Wspomnienie o ks. Aleksandrze Woźnym.” *Niedziela* 8: 6.
- „Konstytucja dogmatyczna o Objawieniu Bożym „...’Dei verbum.’” 1967. In Sobór Watykański II. *Konstytucje, dekryty, deklaracje*, 350-363. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Pallottinum.
- Kubiak, Maciej Karol. 1990. *Życie i posługiwanie księdza Aleksandra Woźnego w świetle nauki Soboru Watykańskiego II o duszpasterzu*. Master’s thesis written under the supervision of Rev. Stefan Schudy at a scientific seminar on pastoral theology – typescript, Archiwum Parafii pw. św. Jana Kantego w Poznaniu.
- Kubiak, Maciej Karol. 1998. *Pokorny i pełen miłości*. Poznań: Kapituła Kolegiacka w Poznaniu.
- Kubiak, Maciej Karol. 1999. “Wspomnienie o księdzu Aleksandrze Woźnym.” *Dobry Pasterz* 24: 138-164.
- Kuklińska, Teresa. 2010. “O duchowości i nauczaniu ks. Aleksandra Woźnego.” In *Z wszystkich zrobić świętych... W stulecie urodzin ks. Aleksandra Woźnego (1910-1983)*, edited by Anita Magowska, 69-72. Poznań: Wydawnictwo „Kontekst”.
- Kwaśna, Anna. 2010. “Katechetka o swoim proboszczu.” In *Z wszystkich zrobić świętych... W stulecie urodzin ks. Aleksandra Woźnego (1910-1983)*, edited by Anita Magowska, 97-104. Poznań: Wydawnictwo „Kontekst”.
- List ks. Aleksandra Woźnego do Józefy Rybackiej*. 1973. Archiwum Parafii pw. św. Jana Kantego w Poznaniu. Dębki: 19 lipca 1973.
- List ks. Aleksandra Woźnego do Marii Gryni*. 1966. Archiwum Parafii pw. św. Jana Kantego w Poznaniu. Poznań: 19 sierpnia 1966.
- Listy księdza Aleksandra Woźnego z Dachau*, edited by Wojciech Mueller. 2016. Poznań: Wydawnictwo “Kontekst”.
- Mueller, Wojciech. 2017. *Jeden z nas. Księdza Aleksandra Woźnego tajemnica powołania*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo “Kontekst”.
- Opinia ks. Kazimierza Szreybrowskiego na temat ks. Aleksandra Woźnego*. 1938. Archiwum Archidiecezjalne w Poznaniu – KA 26330. Poznań: 31 października 1938.

- Opinia ks. Stefana Koczorowskiego na temat ks. Aleksandra Woźnego.* 1936. Archiwum Archidiecezjalne w Poznaniu – KA 26330. Poznań: 8 lutego 1936.
- Pamiętnik kleryka Aleksandra Woźnego.* 1929. Archiwum Parafii pw. św. Jana Kanlego w Poznaniu (Poznań-Gniezno: 1929-1933).
- Pawlaczyk, Czesław. 1985. „Ksiądz Aleksander Woźny 1910-1983.” *Miesięcznik Kościelny Archidiecezji Poznańskiej* 1-2: 33-36.
- Pismo święte Starego i Nowego Testamentu.* 1983. Biblia Tysiąclecia, Poznań-Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Pallottinum.
- Pytel, Jan Kanty. 1994. “Wspomnienie o Autorze książki.” In *Bóg jest najważniejszy*, edited by Aleksander Woźny, 6-10. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Hlondianum.
- Raczkowski, Wojciech. 2010. “Ks. Aleksander Woźny – Sługa Boży.” In *Z wszystkich zrobić świętych... W stulecie urodzin ks. Aleksandra Woźnego (1910-1983)*, edited by Anita Magowska, 27-35. Poznań: Wydawnictwo „Kontekst”.
- Stroba, Jerzy. 1983. *Życzenia na 50-lecie kapłaństwa.* Archiwum Archidiecezjalne w Poznaniu – KA 26330. Poznań: 10 czerwca 1983, 3348/83.
- Stuligrosz, Stefan. 1993. “Duszpasterz pokory i ukojenia. W 10 rocznicę śmierci ks. Aleksandra Woźnego.” *Głos Wielkopolski* 194: 4.
- Stuligrosz, Stefan. 1994. “O Autorze.” In *Wychowanie dla Boga*, edited by Aleksander Woźny, 68-71. Wrocław: “Oficyna Współczesna”.
- Tischner, Józef. 1984. *Jak żyć?*. Katowice: Księgarnia Znak.
- Węclawski, Marcin. 2010. “W blasku łaski Bożej.” In *Z wszystkich zrobić świętych... W stulecie urodzin ks. Aleksandra Woźnego (1910-1983)*, edited by Anita Magowska, 49-58. Poznań: Wydawnictwo “Kontekst”.
- Wistuba, Halina. 1984. *Wspólnota parafialna.* Olsztyn.
- Wistuba, Halina. 1987. “Kapłan na miarę trudnych czasów.” *Posłaniec Warmiński* 6: 7.
- Woźny, Aleksander. 1966. “Niedosyt miłości – przyczyną chorób psychicznych.” *Przewodnik Katolicki* 27: 242.
- Woźny, Aleksander. 1968. “Miłość nie zazdrości.” *Przewodnik Katolicki* 24: 217.
- Woźny, Aleksander. 1972. “Przebaczenie.” *Przewodnik Katolicki* 18: 156.
- Woźny, Aleksander. 1998. *Miłość nigdy nie ustaje...* Poznań: Wydawnictwo Hlondianum.
- Woźny, Aleksander. 2000. *Któż jak Bóg.* Poznań: Wydawnictwo Hlondianum.
- Woźny, Aleksander. 2001. *W krzyżu miłości nauka*, part I. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Pallottinum.
- Woźny, Aleksander. 2005. *Rozważania*, part I. Poznań: Wydawnictwo “Kontekst”.
- Woźny, Aleksander. 2006a. *Rozważania*, part II. Poznań: Wydawnictwo “Kontekst”.
- Woźny, Aleksander. 2006b. *Rozważania*, part III. Poznań: Wydawnictwo “Kontekst”.
- Woźny, Aleksander. 2009. *Komplet X.* Poznań: Wydawnictwo “Kontekst”.



REV. MICHAŁ PIERZCHAŁA

The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9214-2353> \* [michal.pierzchala@kul.pl](mailto:michal.pierzchala@kul.pl)

Received: 11 April 2022; Reviewed: 15 Nov 2022; Accepted: 30 Dec 2023

## THE “VIRUS” OF RADICAL INDIVIDUALISM<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

The pandemic of Covid-19 that brought to a stop not only the world's economies but almost all areas of social life provided numerous moments for reflection and for noticing the widely propagated primacy of individual interest elevated above the common good. The article is aimed to answer the question how the “virus” of radical individualism influences moral attitudes among contemporary people. The method applied in this article is based on the analysis of data contained in selected current theological, sociological and psychological publications and on the synthesis of conclusions drawn from the analysis of these data in relation to the principles of moral theology.

**Keywords:** pandemic, individualism, dialogue, openness, fraternity

### „WIRUS” RADYKLANEGO INDYWIDUALIZMU

### Abstrakt

Pandemia Covid-19, która zatrzymała nie tylko światową gospodarkę, ale niemal wszystkie dziedziny życia społecznego, dostarczyła także wielu okazji do refleksji i zwrócenia uwagi na szeroko propagowany prymat interesu indywidualnego wyniesionego ponad dobro wspólne. Celem artykułu jest odpowiedź na pytanie, w jaki sposób „wirus” radykalnego indywidualizmu wpływa na postawy moralne współczesnych ludzi. Metoda zastosowana w niniejszym artykule opiera się na analizie danych zawartych w wybranych aktualnych publikacjach teologicznych, socjologicznych i psychologicznych oraz na syntezie wniosków wyciągniętych z analizy tych danych w odniesieniu do zasad teologii moralnej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** pandemia, indywidualizm, dialog, otwartość, braterstwo

---

<sup>1</sup> The article is a part of the project funded by the Ministry of Education and Science, Republic of Poland, “Regional Initiative of Excellence” in 2019-2022, 028/RID/2018/19, the amount of funding: PLN 11 742 500.

## INTRODUCTION

Year 2019 will certainly continue to be mentioned numerous times as a cut-off date in the memory and mentality of people of the 21st century. Maintaining a sanitary regime, queues in front of shops, impeded access to many sectors of social life – such problems that were previously known only from books or science fiction films – have become a reality. The pandemic scenario, which came into force at the end of 2019, brought an avalanche of fear, uncertainty, restrictions and difficulties on a global scale. The Covid-19 pandemic affected the lives of many people, usually causing negative effects not only on physical but also on mental health. Many people found it distressing to be ill in mandatory isolation or to stay in closed hospital wards, not to mention the pain of losing family members to the virus. Even if the illness did not affect everyone directly, it was overwhelming, including the omnipresent fear, the need to limit interpersonal contacts, which – for many – meant the forced transition to remote working and waiting for further messages about the availability of various services and goods. Obsessive-compulsive disorders and anxiety disorders, depressive episodes or other consequences of social fear have appeared or intensified among quite a number of people.

While the eyes of scientists and medics were drawn to the SARS CoV-2 virus, Pope Francis, in the pages of his encyclical on brotherhood, pointed to another extremely threatening disease whose consequences are not limited to the temporal dimension. The Holy Father pointed out that radical individualism is the virus most difficult to overcome (Francis 2020a, 105). Today's Europeans live in a culture that some have called 'postmodern' because everything seems fluid, changeable and relative (Bauman 2006, 7-8). However, as others have noted, even postmodern variability can be accustomed to and made a kind of certainty (Brinkmann 2019, 11-27). The postmodern interpretation of the world extinguishes in man the desire for faith in God and fidelity to Christian values. Contemporary culture seems to postulate the non-existence of moral values and principles, proclaiming moral permissiveness. Paradoxically, the propaganda of a world without clear rules and freedom as the supreme value does not result in the ease of making important decisions and courage among young people. On the contrary, today's young people run away from binding decisions and lasting relationships, fearing risks, mistakes and above all responsibility, as Pope Francis noted (Francis 2019, 140-43). As research on decision-making processes shows, culture and its respective scripts regarding decision-making have a significant impact on making or failure to make decisions (Yates and de Oliveira 2016, 106-118).

It seems that never before have people possessed such extensive and systematised knowledge of the world and the changes or processes that determine it, and yet never before have they been so lonely and lost. Today's people can do more and more, but unfortunately it is becoming more and more difficult for them to form lasting bonds, which is evidenced by the increasing scale of divorces and informal relationships (Boertien 2020, 18-22), because people are afraid to vow eternal fidelity. In addition,



private interest increasingly takes precedence over the common good in numerous areas of politics, economics, science and culture. Meanwhile, as the current Bishop of Rome teaches, "individualism does not make us more brothers" (Francis 2020a, 105), and thus does not help us build either interdisciplinary or interpersonal bridges. The Covid-19 pandemic has become not only a difficult challenge, but also an opportunity to pause and to reflect on the values and goals that contemporary man wants to achieve.

The method applied in this article is based on the analysis of data contained in selected current theological, sociological and psychological publications and on a synthesis of conclusions drawn from the analysis of these data in relation to the principles of moral theology. The chosen methods will enable an answer to the research question posed and moral evaluation of the attitude of radical individualism and the human actions which stem from it. The article is aimed to answer the question how the 'virus' of radical individualism influences moral attitudes among contemporary people. An attempt to answer the question what values should be promoted and what skills should be developed in order to counteract the logic of radical individualism will be the next aim of the article. Searching for an answer to this question, based on the teaching of the Church and current theological publications, seems to be important not only for the development of moral theology's reflection, but also for the pastoral activity of the Church and for seeking directions for moral transformation of Western civilization.

## 1. RADICAL INDIVIDUALISM IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

The contemporary culture called as postmodern by some researchers seems difficult to be uniquely defined (Suwada 2007, 39-43). The current reality has created enormous opportunities for the use of technological achievements, thanks to which numerous industrial, medical, educational and social processes have been improved. Contemporary people understand not only the laws that govern the world, but – thanks to the development of natural sciences – they also become familiar with those that function in the universe. The continuous development of new technologies contributes to the development of science, which has a real impact on human life and health, a current example being the development of mRNA and vector technology used for the production of vaccines against Covid-19. The possibility and easiness of contacts using digital tools is another great achievement of the modern world. Widespread access to the Internet means that information spreads at the speed of light. This has opened the door to cooperation in many sectors of business, science and it has also enabled intercontinental exchange of ideas and opinions. Despite many advantages of the modern age, it must be stressed that there are numerous dangers, particularly in the field of ethics and morality due to eradication of the primacy or even rejection of God's existence and the lack of obedience in faith to the Creator. Man without God becomes an individualist with a narrow, because only temporal, horizon.

Individualism is based on the Latin word *individuum*, which means something indivisible and individual. The notion of individualism is associated with the 19th century and the period of the influence of post-revolutionary French thought, although the concept of individualism has its origins in the Middle Ages. In Philosophy, it was developed, among others, by Duns Scotus, and then it also found a place in Cartesian philosophy, English empiricists, Kantianism and many other philosophers. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that it was developed by Nietzsche, who applauded the power and strength of human beings and the necessity of making their actions independent of religion and morality (Duraj-Nowakowa 2013, 143-44). In his reflection Charles Taylor distinguished three types of this phenomenon, diversifying them into individualism of rational control, personal engagement and expressivist individualism (Barnat 2009, 2). In his concept of individualism, Taylor opted for the coherence of the three types of individualism as having their provenance in St. Augustine's philosophy (Barnat 2009, 3). The Canadian philosopher rightly pointed out that individualism should neither be glorified nor discarded, but that a proper interpretation of it should be continuously sought, because the question of an individual's place in society and the extent of his/her freedom will always raise justifiable questions.

Although easily observable in the postmodern world, individualism as a philosophical view is structurally founded on liberalism and proclaims the supremacy of the individual comprehended maximally in relation to society (Wierzbicki 1997, 178-179). The aspirations to equality and the ornate ideas promoted by liberalism do not in their true intention aim at a hierarchy of values creating a world based on a fair distribution of wealth. On the contrary, they call for a positive settlement of private interests (Legutko 2012, 133). Individualism was taken over and expanded by capitalism and developed especially in the United States as a paradigm of democratic and capitalist society (Duraj-Nowakowa 2013, 143). Outside the field of philosophy, individualism has been used as a concept in psychology to describe non-conformist behaviours towards a group or society. Apart from the humanities, it is also used in economic or political contexts.

The postmodern world, of which radical individualism is an essential component, has been identified by specialists as a good foundation for the development of a new philosophy. Postmodernity is not decadent, as postmodern philosophers want to create a better world (Bronk 2002, 934-935). The critique of Enlightenment philosophy is undoubtedly the advantage of postmodernity; however, along with the rejection of Kant's philosophy presenting the unlimited potentiality of human intellect, unfortunately there was no return to the medieval *ordo* with the primacy of God at the head. Promoted in the post-modern era, the separation from Christian anthropology postulates the negation of the existing comprehension of man's nature and his eschatological destiny, which causes questioning his value by reducing the human being to a product of evolution (Bronk 2002, 929-936). The postmodern background shapes the current culture of

the new man – an atheist, consumer and individualist, who does not have to regard anyone or anything.

The development of technology often causes the 21st-century people to forget that they derive their cognitive and volitional creativity for planning and action from the "*creatio continua*" of God, in whom they live, move and are (Acts 17:28). Promoted by the advertising world in the mass media and during various campaigns, the utopia of self-sufficiency tempts man to believe that he does not need God, but that he can build a new and better world by his own efforts alone. Pope Benedict XVI observed a civilisation without God is also empty of all hope (Benedict XVI 2007, 44). Based on a paradigm of radical individualism, the world postulates that only the development of medicine or the knowledge of the rules of economics is enough to lead a long and happy life. Online advertisements convince people that they can be eternally young thanks to dietary supplements or medical procedures, that they can be strong and prominent thanks to considerable sums of money deposited in private accounts, regardless of whether they were obtained honestly. The Covid-19 pandemic gave the lie to the delusion of a world where God, brother, sister or concern for one another do not matter. The prevalence of infection and a high number of daily deaths that persisted for weeks shook the sense of security that medicines or money were supposed to provide. The reality of the epidemic turned people's eyes to death (Garber 2021, 1729-1730), which had previously been almost completely banished from Western culture and has been treated as the sad end of all pleasures not worth considering.

From a theological point of view, radical individualism is essentially an attitude of pride which blinds man, not allowing him to discover the truth that the human being is a mystery to himself, the explanation of which he receives in reference to his Creator (John Paul II 1979, 14). It is worth mentioning that the lack of reference to God does not result in the impoverishment of the spiritual side of man alone, but makes the whole person feel abandoned. Psychological studies illustrate the increase in the feeling of loneliness among the 21st-century people (Tiwari 2013, 321) which not infrequently leads to loss of meaning in life, depression or other diseases. Because of loneliness, people more easily turn to addictive substances and habits in which they seek relief for their pain and existential emptiness. As studies from Mexico show, the pandemic reality has also fostered a significant increase in anxiety and destructive forms of coping, such as the entry or deepening of addictions (Priego-Parra et al. 2020). During the Covid-19 pandemic, an increase in mortality among young people in Indianapolis was observed, however, not from the coronavirus infection itself but from drug overdose (Glober et al. 2020, 802-807).

The above-mentioned data can be read as a desperate cry in the hustle and bustle of modernity, expressing a desire to return to the Merciful Father's house. Another way of compensating for inner emptiness is workaholism, which finds its extreme exemplification, among others, in the hikikomori syndrome, which became strongly visible in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic (Sarnowski and Dominiak 2021, 26-34). Man today wants to be free and independent, but the harder he fights for his

independence, the more he becomes a slave to addictions, money and work. The 'virus' of radical individualism fails to make man more free and fulfilled, but it leaves him lonely and frustrated. It is worth recalling the words of the eminent Polish psychiatrist Antoni Kępiński: "the greater the internal breakdown in man, the sense of his own fragility, uncertainty and fear, the greater the longing for something that will bring him back together, give him certainty and self-confidence". Certainly, the promotion of radically individualistic attitudes neither unites nor heals the human heart shattered by sin, as evidenced by the data cited above. However, it is also worth undertaking an in-depth theological reflection on the moral dangers posed by the issues discussed.

## 2. AN ATTEMPT TO ASSESS A RADICAL INDIVIDUALISTIC ATTITUDE ACCORDING TO THE CATHOLIC MORAL THEOLOGY

In the teaching of the Church, individualism is understood as an attitude which gives priority to individual people and their claims to freedom. For many reasons it has been negatively assessed in statements of the Church's Magisterium. The Successors of St. Peter, especially in the 21st century, have frequently drawn attention to radical individualism as a particularly threatening danger. The first argument pointing to the need to recognize radical individualism as an attitude endangering the integral development of man is the negation of God and the need for a relationship with Him. The proclamation that man can exist by himself and does not need to relate to the Creator promotes an erroneous anthropology. The Holy Pontiff in his exhortation on the European Church pointed out that: "Forgetfulness of God led to the abandonment of man". It is therefore "no wonder that in this context a vast field has opened for the unrestrained development of nihilism in philosophy, of relativism in values and morality, and of pragmatism – and even a cynical hedonism – in daily life". European culture gives the impression of 'silent apostasy' on the part of people who have everything that they need and who live as if God does not exist" (John Paul II 2003, 9). Although almost two decades have passed since these words were published, they have not lost their prophetic meaning and precision in diagnosing the diseases of the Old Continent.

In his teaching, John Paul II repeatedly pointed out the holistic dimension of the human person and his dignity, which finds its justification in reference to creation by the Holy Trinity out of love. Therefore, the Pope emphasized that man realizes himself in his full capacity as a person only when he evolves in relation to God, himself and to another person. If man rejected his spiritual dimension and tried to live only as a purely material creature, then his humanity would become incomplete (John Paul II 2005, 103). For man to be able to recognize and maintain the right direction of auto-transcendence towards Truth and Love, he needs to take care of the formation of his conscience. According to papal teaching, this transcendence of man should be read in the category of mutual dialogue between God and man (Szymonik 2015, 338-339). This demonstrates the need for constant care so that the spiritual life can have a significant influence on moral attitudes,

healing the human heart of the sinful wounds that concentrate man on himself, driving him into the illusion of self-sufficiency and autosoterism.

Pope Benedict XVI, in turn, presented in his teaching a constructive criticism of radical individualism, pointing out the grave consequences it produces on a personal and social level. Above all, the Holy Father recognised and drew attention to the link between individualism and relativism. Individualism, by convincing man of the validity of the judgments of his own conscience and his opinions, has found expression in the relativisation of reality, which is strongly present in Western culture, with the result that modern man understands himself to be almost omnipotent, and – therefore – the usefulness and benefit that can be derived from it is the only criterion for doing or not doing certain acts. As the then Bishop of Rome indicated, the failure to acknowledge God's love as a constitutive force in the history of humanity and the renunciation of reference to the Truth cause man to become short-sighted and to perceive reality in a fragmented way. Narrowing the field of cognition often leads to errors based on inference *pars pro toto*, which does not allow for objective axiological evaluation and the choice of the true good. It also results in a reductionist vision of the human person, who, in a way, 'ceases to be human' without reference to God and without the recognition of his rights as proper norms (Jaroszyński 2007, 483).

A second argument indicating the need to recognize radical individualism as a dangerous attitude for man is the erroneous conception of conscience which it entails. Saint John Paul II pointed out the need for the individual subject to respect the existence of objective truth and to follow the course it indicates. In view of this, liberalist and individualist paradigms demanding the primacy of the individual's moral judgement stand in opposition. The Polish Pope taught that:

"Instead, there is a tendency to grant to the individual conscience the prerogative of independently determining the criteria of good and evil and then acting accordingly. Such an outlook is quite congenial to an individualist ethic, wherein each individual is faced with his own truth, different from the truth of others. Taken to its extreme consequences, this individualism leads to a denial of the very idea of human nature" (John Paul II 1993, 32).

The Bishop of Rome warned against an individualistic ethic based on the subjective judgments of conscience, which does not wish to seek the truth in confronting the actions and attitudes of life (John Paul II 1994, 14). The present world is struggling with a crisis of the truth and, as a result, people are becoming more and more confused about who they really are. In his encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, the Holy Father stated that it is a mistake to believe that every individual judgment of human conscience is true. It cannot be claimed that everything that is formed as the individual's proper judgement is authentic. The consent to such formation of the criteria for the authenticity of judgments would imply that anyone could construct his own truth and place himself as superior to others, which is the opposite of the logic of service and self-giving for which God calls in Christ (John

Paul II 1993, 32). Assigning an absolute dimension to the personal freedom of specific individuals leads to a lack of social solidarity and, thus, also to inequality, divisions, domination of the richer and stronger over the poorer and, consequently, to the denial of man's primal vocation to live in community with God and his brothers (Bartoszek 2005, 239-241). A misformed conscience makes it impossible to know and to act the truth. An attitude of honesty is one of the foundations of the civilisation of love. As Benedict XVI taught: "Without truth, without trust and love for what is true, there is no social conscience and responsibility, and social action ends up serving private interests and the logic of power, resulting in social fragmentation, especially in a globalized society at difficult times like the present" (Benedict XVI 2009, 5). What is needed, then, is concern for the proper formation of conscience and for the authenticity of life, which means an attitude of living the truth in love (Derdziuk 2019, 41). To properly form one's conscience, man must acknowledge his finiteness and sinfulness and reject radical individualism in favour of humble surrender to the formation of God acting in his Church.

On several occasions both in his speeches and documents, the Holy Father Francis has stressed the need to take care of fraternal relationships, because they cause the community of the Church to give authentic witness to the world. Moreover, the Pope points out the need to perceive the causal relationship between the anthropological error and various disasters in numerous areas of social life. Individualism has a destructive effect on many cultural spaces and, what is worse, it weakens, deforms and often gradually breaks family ties altogether (Francis 2013, 67). Deception, conflict, verbal and physical violence are allowed in the name of pursuing the interests of an individual. A hedonistic attitude of the spouse or family member becomes not only an unbearable burden, but also a cause of division between other subjects of family life. Radical individualism is combined with ego-centrism, both of which only lead to more and more frustration and dissatisfaction with life, for which others are always blamed. Families without evangelical paradigms become a permanent battlefield and a zone of struggle for influence, a place where the aspiration to dominate and subordinate others is realized. The Holy Father posed an extremely important question that cannot go unheeded: "Amid the fray of conflicting interests, where victory consists in eliminating one's opponents, how is it possible to raise our sights to recognize our neighbours or to help those who have fallen along the way?" (Francis 2020a, 16). In the monthly magazine about Christian life called "W Drodze" in issue 3/2022, M. Terlikowska in her article entitled *The Ruthlessness* drew readers' attention to the problem of radicalization of interpersonal relations and the issue of increasing hostility and ruthlessness in society. The author noticed that attitudes and words that were once disgraceful are now commonplace or even desired; the modern world is becoming increasingly ruthless not only in its judgements, but also continues to push the boundaries of degrading, hating or calumny (Terlikowska 2022, 44-51).

Francis observes that globalization and ethnicization make us live closer together in theory, but – in reality – we are not more brothers. Many moral transgressions in

all areas of life are ultimately caused by sin, which makes man fail to acknowledge the Lordship of God, but makes him want to decide for himself about evil and good. Meanwhile, the pursuit of power, weapons and money does not make for a safer and more cohesive life. The unfair distribution of wealth is causing an increase in the number of suicides among groups of people living in poverty, who are unable to access medical care and other social goods, as confirmed by current research (Bachmann 2018, 5-23). The individualistic world means that a person has no-one to lean on, and thus more easily loses the sense of life and self-esteem. The Pope states that the concept of neighbour presented in the parable of the Good Samaritan has no limits, which calls for a multi-dimensional conversion of the secularized West (Francis 2020a, 80-83). It would therefore be valuable to return to this parable again and again, especially when deciding by one's own fate as well as the fate of fellow human beings.

In his encyclical letter on ecology, the Pope also condemns the so-called 'romantic individualism' based on efforts to protect the environment and particular animal species without any sensitivity or concern for other humans, for climate problems cannot be effectively solved without efforts to change the mentality of exploitation and consumerism in favour of equality and fraternity. The Pope said: "If the present ecological crisis is one small sign of the ethical, cultural and spiritual crisis of modernity, we cannot presume to heal our relationship with nature and the environment without healing all fundamental human relationships" (Francis 2015, 119). Relativism and individualism cause man to stop looking towards others with kindness and willingness to cooperate, but to look for opportunities to make money out of other people. According to Francis, it is precisely relativization and individualisation that make all tricks permitted, which gives rise to exploitation, slavery as well as an anti-life culture that seeks to eliminate the conceived human beings, the handicapped and the elderly. If everything is perceived as relative, it creates the ground for a logic of one-time use and rejection also in interpersonal relationships (Francis 2015, 123). It can be said that the attitude of individualism has spread almost like the Sars-CoV2 virus and will remain with us perhaps until the end of time as a temptation to ignore others. Certainly, a lot of effort is needed to shape new patterns that will allow bridges to be built across divisions. That is why it is already worth reflecting upon the directions for changing the face of the modern world to one that is friendlier and more open to everyone.

Radical individualism is a 'virus' extremely difficult to eliminate, because it offers easy, quick and seemingly effective actions to ensure happiness, which is why so many today succumb to this illusion. Radical individualism, like the Sars CoV-2 virus, spreads in an instant and causes long-term consequences in the mentality of people in the modern era. Among them we can highlight the promotion of atheism and erroneous anthropology, the dispensation from the obligation to pursue and learn the truth and the formation of conscience as well as the reassurance of man in the neo-liberal slogan that he does not have to pay attention to anyone in the pursuit of his desires. These are only some of the consequences of the phenomenon

under discussion, but they are sufficient not only to assess radical individualism as a morally destructive attitude, but also to reflect on ways of preventing its effects.

### 3. SHAPING EMPATHETIC AND FRATERNAL APPROACH AS CHRISTIAN WAY OF DEFENDING AGAINST INDIVIDUALISTIC ATTITUDES

Radical individualism can be understood not only as a particular attitude present in the mentality and actions of individuals and societies, but also as a spiritual disease. The aim of the last part of the article will be to seek, on the basis of Church teaching and current theological reflections, an answer to the question of which values to promote and which skills to develop in order to counteract a radically individualistic logic. The human being is by nature *capax Dei*, which means open to the Creator (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2009, 27). With reference to this truth, one discovers that the first way and the *sine qua non* of transforming a human heart infected by the ‘virus’ of extreme radical individualism is to take care to live by faith, because “every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights” (James 1:17). St John wrote in his Letter: “this is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4). This is why today there is a particular need for a more intense concern for the life of faith in order to overcome pride, the illusion of self-sufficiency and the logic of exploiting others for one’s own ends.

Without faith understood as a personal relationship with God and following Christ, it is difficult – if not impossible – to fulfil God’s commandments, especially the call to love one’s enemies (John Paul II 1993, 15-17). Without humble faith there will be nothing but a world of individualists and egocentrics. In order to change the mentality of the 21st-century man, it is necessary to grow in the virtue of faith and to call trustfully on the gifts of the Holy Spirit who, coming on the Pentecost Day, caused a revolution of love in the minds of the Apostles. They experienced at that moment the metanoia, the conversion of hearts and thoughts, which later became the experience of pagans and the whole world. In the face of today’s neo-pagan Western civilisation, there is a need for the courageous proclamation of the truth about man according to the Gospel and a call for the action of the Paraclete, because “faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ” (Rom 10:17), and without the help of the Holy Spirit, no one can confess Jesus as the Lord (1 Cor 12:3) and follow His law. For this reason, in his Exhortation to the young the Holy Father Francis wrote: “The Holy Spirit wants to stimulate us to leave our world, to take others in our arms with love and to strive for their good. For this reason, it is always better to practice our faith in a communal way and to express our love in community life” (Francis 2019, 164). The Pope reminded that prayer and patiently asking for the gifts of the Holy Spirit broadens the horizons of the heart and makes it easier to perceive the needs of others, and thus, by cooperating with God’s grace, man can be changed from a radical individualist into a follower of the Good Samaritan.



A second way of counteracting radical individualism is to implant and promote attitudes of empathy and openness towards others. On multiple occasions, the current Successor of St. Peter has pointed out the need for openness, dialogue and the development of the ability to relate to the pluralism of human world-views with respect. Dialogue is not about abandoning our own opinions, but rather about readiness to listen to the messages of others and to seek the truth together. The aim of dialogue is to build unity, which is not irenicism, conformism or uniformity (Wielebski 2016, 52-53). The readiness for sincere dialogue is a capacity linked to the operation of God's anticipating grace, which not only inspires faith in human fraternity, but it also makes it possible (Francis and Ahmad Al-Tayyeb 2019). The ability to listen to the voice of other people without haste or pretension is the first important element in forming and developing a dialogical attitude. At this point it is worth recalling a passage from the teaching of the Holy Father Francis:

“The ability to sit down and listen to others, typical of interpersonal encounters, is paradigmatic of the welcoming attitude shown by those who transcend narcissism and accept others, caring for them and welcoming them into their lives. Yet today's world is largely a deaf world...” (Francis 2020a, 48).

At first glance, the above text deals with an obvious notion, namely an elementary skill in human relationships. However, the contemporary individualistically-oriented man has to learn this skill from the beginning. Moreover, the growing interest in coaching, psychological trainings, and mindfulness methods indicate the actuality of this issue. Hence, it is worth appreciating the wealth of psychological knowledge, which can be helpful in authentic and integral development. Frequently, many problems in interpersonal relationships are related to the lack of good contact with one's emotions and self-cognition, and the inability to express and control one's emotions, which results in numerous conflicts in families and societies. Therefore, it is worth paying attention to the issues of attentiveness, empathy and openness, because without them it is very difficult to imagine valuable meetings and profound bonds. Without developing these skills, man will cease to be the crown of creation and will become a cog in the machine and a slave to technocracy. Efforts are required to awaken and shape sensitivity and openness to others, because without them the world will not be a better place. In the second volume of *Lapidarium*, Ryszard Kapuściński aptly put the necessity of caring for the values in question in the words: “I am afraid of a world without values, without sensitivity, without thinking. A world in which everything is possible. Because then evil is the most possible”.

The third value that cannot be omitted in countering radical individualism is love. In Tallinn during a meeting with those benefiting from charitable services, the Holy Father Francis recalled that “charity breaks the chains that isolate us and separate us. It enables us to build a large family in which we can all feel at home. Love has a taste of compassion and dignity” (Francis 2018, 35). As St Paul wrote, love is over all virtues because love binds all together in perfect unity (Col. 3:14)

and it is what really counts. Today we need to be involved in the development not only of science and technology, but also of love and charity. It is now a virtue that is extremely deformed in the mass media and reduced to a merely emotional experience. In his exhortation on the family, Pope Francis is pained to see the signs of the times, pointing to the volatility and impermanence of relationships, the fear of binding declarations and the lack of responsibility (Francis 2016, 39). The Successor of St. Peter points out that:

“We treat affective relationships the way we treat material objects and the environment: everything is disposable; everyone uses and throws away, takes and breaks, exploits and squeezes to the last drop. Then, goodbye. Narcissism makes people incapable of looking beyond themselves, beyond their own desires and needs” (Francis 2016, 39).

There is a need to properly define love in the modern world, and therefore to proclaim the truth about God who is love and the source of it. Benedict XVI pointed to love as the only paradigm on which solidarity and fraternity could be founded. The world is not purely mathematical, therefore even this minimum of love can make an enormous contribution and be of huge value, because a Christian is someone who loves, as the Pope preached in one of his sermons (Ratzinger 2017, 342).

Therefore, priests, parents, catechesis teachers and other teachers have an important role to play in promoting the above-mentioned Christian values. The condition of society is a reflection of the state of life of married couples and families, and for this reason the family should be an important object of educational and supportive action on the part of the State as well as a pupil in the eye of the pastoral action of the Church. It is important that, thanks to the efforts of pastors, state institutions and parents, families should become schools of empathy, sensitivity and fraternity towards others. An invaluable role in the transmission of values is played by the testimony of parents and family members, which becomes an attractive model for subsequent generations. Therefore, it is important that such testimony be of Christian love, which does not exclude, but goes out with an open heart toward brothers and sisters. There is also a need for renewed concern for inter-generational dialogue and cooperation between family entities, since they are complementary to one another. Giving up the richness that each person's age-appropriate experience can bring is an invaluable resource that would be a great loss (Francis 2019, 191).

Pope Francis has drawn attention to cultural deconstructionism (Francis 2020a, 12), which is a consequence of living in a constant rush, lacking mutual respect and the ability to listen to one another as well as openness in intergenerational dialogue. This is expressed in nowadays culture, among other things, in the form of the slogan ‘put the past behind’. It calls for building a new world without God, without brotherhood interpreted according to Christianity, without reference to history or

tradition. In contrast, it is worth noting that in many Eastern cultures the elderly are identified with sages and the value as well as wisdom of tradition and of historical experience is appreciated, the antagonists of which are postmodernists (Goncalo and Staw 2006, 96-99). The Pope warned young people against a world which rejects its roots, because then the next generation risks reproducing the fatal errors of the forefathers (Francis 2020a, 35). It is necessary not only to have knowledge of universal history, but – above all – of the economy of salvation, which shows that true heyday of individuals and societies comes from the acceptance and observance of God's laws and directives, since they not only indicate the way to the true good, but also make it possible to discover the brother in another person. In order to build a civilization of love, it is necessary to know the pages of history so as not to repeat the same mistakes and not to fall back into the blind alleys of individualism, but – instead of building walls of division – to build bridges of brotherly love. In order to overcome individualistic and narcissistic attitudes, there is a need to return to the Christian understanding of love and to ensure that it is the motive and goal of all personal and social actions. It therefore seems necessary to take new pastoral and educational initiatives aimed at forming a fraternal mentality in families and local communities.

The challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic can help people perceive that we are members of the same human family, so we need to reconsider how to provide access to health systems for poor people, because if we are more fraternal, we will be more human (Gocko 2020, 122). The Covid-19 pandemic has helped us notice that we are not separate monads. Remarkable words were spoken by the current Bishop of Rome in Moment of Prayer and 'Urbi et Orbi' Blessing presided over by Pope Francis on 27 March 2020. In his mediation in an empty St. Peter's Square at the time of the pandemic the Pope said:

"In this world, that you love more than we do, we have gone ahead at breakneck speed, feeling powerful and able to do anything. Greedy for profit, we let ourselves get caught up in things, and lured away by haste. We did not stop at your reproach to us, we were not shaken awake by wars or injustice across the world, nor did we listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet. We carried on regardless, thinking we would stay healthy in a world that was sick. Now that we are in a stormy sea, we implore you: Wake up, Lord!" (Francis 2020b).

We are all 'in the same boat', therefore fraternity is the only way that can allow humanity to grow in the right direction (Francis and Ivereigh 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic – as a time of omnipresent threat of disease, death, loss of health, work, and safety – has become an opportunity to verify what really matters and a call to evaluate the axiology of today's world. It is worth taking advantage of this crisis to give God his rightful place and to discover that "love, linked to truth, is the force that forms a community and unites people in such a way that there are no barriers or borders" (Benedict XVI 2009, 34).

## CONCLUSIONS

The experience of the pandemic of Covid-19 has provided an opportunity to reflect not only on viruses that cause somatic diseases, but also to see the threats posed by the attitude of radical individualism. This text is the result of an attempt to answer the questions how the 'virus' of radical individualism influences moral attitudes of contemporary man and what actions should be taken to counteract the logic of radical individualism.

As a result of applying the method of analyzing selected theological, psychological and sociological sources and the method of synthesis, it was noticed that radical individualism is an attitude which strongly influences the culture of the 21st century. It causes grave consequences for health and life, which are not limited only to the physical, but also psychological and spiritual aspects. These are some of the effects which were observed: anxiety, losing the sense of life, addictions, divorces, conflicts and divisions in families and societies. Radical individualism should be classified as a highly dangerous threat, especially in the spiritual dimension for several reasons, some of which include the denial of God and the need for a relationship with Him, the promotion of an anthropological error and a deformed concept of conscience as well as the social consequences of hostility, ruthlessness, conflicts and divisions.

The research into recent Papal teaching in order to find answers to the question of how to counter individualistic logic has led to several conclusions. The need to value the virtues of faith, love and attitudes of openness and fraternity has been recognized. The family and the Church should work together to instill in successive generations a concern for the life of faith and love and their development, and attitudes of openness and fraternity towards others should be promoted. Certainly, these tasks are not simple, nor are they achievable quickly. However, they are worth undertaking because this axiological crisis is forcing humanity to take decisive steps. As Pope Francis wrote in his book 'Let us dream', we will come out of this experience better or worse, but never the same (Francis and Ivereigh 2020, 7). It is worth taking just one step to move from radical individualism to faith, love and fraternity.

## REFERENCES:

- Bachmann, Silke. 2018. "Epidemiology of Suicide and the Psychiatric Perspective." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 15(7): 1425. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph1507142>.
- Barnat, Damian. 2009. "Individualism in the Philosophy of Charles Taylor." *Diametros* 20: 1-36.
- Bartoszek, Antoni. 2005. "Indywidualizm." In *Jan Paweł II: Encyklopedia Nauczania Moralnego*, 239-241. Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. 2006. *Płynna Nowoczesność*. Translated by Tomasz Kunz. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie.

- Benedict XVI. 2007. *Spe Salvi*.
- Benedict XVI. 2009. *Caritas in veritate*.
- Boertien, Diederik. 2020. "The Conceptual and Empirical Challenges of Estimating Trends in Union Stability: Have Unions Become More Stable in Britain?" In *Divorce in Europe: New Insights in Trends, Causes and Consequences of Relation Break-Ups*, edited by Dimitri Mortelmans, 17-36. Cham: Springer International Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-25838-2\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-25838-2_2).
- Brinkmann, Svend. 2019. *Poczuj grunt pod nogami. Jak uciec z pułapki samorozwoju?* Translated by Justyna Haber-Biały and Agata Lubowicka. Kraków: Mando.
- Bronk, Andrzej. 2002. "Postmodernizm." In *Leksykon Teologii Fundamentalnej*, 929-935. Kraków: Wydawnictwo M.
- Derdziuk, Andrzej. 2019. *Prawda, dobro, sumienie*. Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL.
- Duraj-Nowakowa, Krystyna. 2013. "Indywidualizm pedagogów akademickich: zagrożenia i perspektywy." *Horyzonty Wychowania* 12(24): 141-60.
- Francis and Ahmad Al-Tayyeb. 2019. "Dokument o Ludzkim Braterstwie dla Pokoju Światowego i Współistnienia."
- Francis Pope and Austen Ivereigh. 2020. *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Francis. 2013. *Evangelii Gaudium*.
- Francis. 2015. *Laudato Si*.
- Francis. 2016. *Amoris Laetitia*.
- Francis. 2018. „Przemówienie podczas spotkania z osobami wspomaganymi przez kościelne dzieła charytatywne.” *L'Osservatore Romano*, Polish edition 406: 35.
- Francis. 2019. *Christus Vivit*.
- Francis. 2020a. *Fratelli Tutti*.
- Francis. 2020b. "Rozważanie Papieża Franciszka przed nadzwyczajnym błogosławieństwem *Urbi et Orbi* 27 Marca 2020." Accessed by 27.03.2020. <https://www.ekai.pl/dokumenty/rozwazanie-papieza-franciszka-przed-nadzwyczajnym-blogoslawienstwem-urbi-et-orbi-27-marca-2020/>.
- Garber, Alan M. 2021. "Learning From Excess Pandemic Deaths." *JAMA* 325(17): 1729-1730. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2021.5120>.
- Glober, Nancy et al. 2020. "Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Drug Overdoses in Indianapolis." *Journal of Urban Health* 97(6): 802-807. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-020-00484-0>.
- Gocko, Jerzy. 2020. "Moralno-społeczne aspekty troski o zdrowie w kontekście epidemii COVID-19." *Roczniki Teologiczne* 67(3): 121-135. <https://doi.org/10.18290/rt.20673-7>.
- Goncalo, Jack A. and Barry M. Staw. 2006. "Individualism-Collectivism and Group Creativity." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 100 (1): 96-109. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2005.11.003>.

- Jaroszyński, Piotr. 2007. "Personalizm filozoficzny – integralna wizja człowieka." In *Dusza, umysł, ciało: Spór o jedność bytową człowieka*, edited by Andrzej Maryniarczyk and Katarzyna Stępień, 473-485. Lublin: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu.
- John Paul II. 1979. *Redemptor Hominis*.
- John Paul II. 1993. *Veritatis Splendor*.
- John Paul II. 1994. Letter to families *Gratissimam sane*.
- John Paul II. 2003. *Ecclesia in Europa*.
- John Paul II. 2005. *Pamięć i tożsamość: rozmowy na przełomie tysiącleci*, edited by Paweł Ptasznik and Paolo Sardi. Kraków: Znak.
- Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego*. 2009. 2nd edition corrected. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Pallottinum.
- Legutko, Ryszard. 2012. *Triumf człowieka polskiego*. Poznań: Zysk i S-ka Wydawnictwo.
- Priego-Parra, Bryan Adrián et al. 2020. "Anxiety, Depression, Attitudes, and Internet Addiction during the Initial Phase of the 2019 Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Epidemic: A Cross-Sectional Study in México." medRxiv. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.05.10.20095844>.
- Ratzinger, Joseph. 2017. *Wprowadzenie w chrześcijaństwo*, vol. 4. Translated by Zofia Włodkowska. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL.
- Sarnowski, Piotr and Rafał Dominiak. 2021. "Wycofanie Społeczne w Dobie Pandemii Covid-19: Stary Problem – Nowe Ofiary." *Kultura i Wychowanie* 19(1): 25-40. [https://doi.org/10.25312/2083-2923.19/2021\\_02psrd](https://doi.org/10.25312/2083-2923.19/2021_02psrd).
- Suwada, Katarzyna. 2007. "Jak nazwać współczesność?: problem konceptualizacji płynnej nowoczesności Zygmunta Baumana, drugiej nowoczesności Ulricha Becka i późnej nowoczesności Anthony'ego Giddensa." *Kultura i Edukacja* 3: 37-48.
- Szymonik, Marian. 2015. *Filozoficzne podstawy kategorii godności człowieka w ujęciu personalizmu szkoły lubelskiej*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL.
- Terlikowska, Małgorzata. 2022. "Bezwzględność." *W Drodze. Miesięcznik Poświęcony Życiu Chrześcijańskiemu* 3: 44-51.
- Tiwari, Sarvada Chandra. 2013. "Loneliness: A Disease?" *Indian Journal of Psychiatry* 55(4): 320-322. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0019-5545.120536>.
- Wielebski, Tomasz. 2016. "Dialog Ad Intra i Ad Extra Kościoła w Polsce." *Roczniki Teologiczne* 63(6): 51-74. <https://doi.org/10.18290/rt.2016.63.6-5>.
- Wierzbicki, Alfred. 1997. "Indywidualizm." In *Encyklopedia Katolicka*, edited by Stanisław Wielgus et al., vol. 7. Lublin: TN KUL.
- Yates, Frank J. and Stephanie de Oliveira. 2016. "Culture and Decision Making." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, Celebrating Fifty Years of Organizational Behavior and Decision-Making Research (1966-2016)*, 136 (September): 106-118. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2016.05.003>.

SEMINARE

t. 43 \* 2022, nr 4, s. 99-114

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.21852/sem.2022.4.07>



REV. TOMASZ ADAMCZYK

John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8288-5783>, \* [tomaszadamczyk@kul.pl](mailto:tomaszadamczyk@kul.pl)

REV. MICHAŁ KLEMENTOWICZ

John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5375-7961>, e-mail: [hindenburg@wp.pl](mailto:hindenburg@wp.pl).

Received: 30 Nov 2022; Reviewed: 29 Dec 2022; Accepted: 30 Dec 2022

## THE HOMILY IN THE EYES OF THE YOUTH: THE PROBLEM OF SYMMETRY. A SOCIOLOGICAL AND TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

### Abstract

The article discusses the category of symmetry. As a linguistic category, it is mainly studied in the context of 'linguistic politeness'. In textual studies, symmetry defines the shape of an utterance. In the process of communication, symmetry helps prevent differences between the subjects regarding their professional status, different social position or knowledge levels. The sociological studies (survey data from ca. 1 400 participants) show the urgent need to apply symmetry in homiletics as a response to various shortcomings of the process of exchanging thoughts during liturgy. Symmetry in sermons should be achieved in a twofold manner: 1. by maintaining the dialogical structure of the sermon; 2. by precisely defining the *questio* of the homily.

**Keywords:** qualitative research, homily, communication, sociology of religion, symmetry, text

## HOMILIA W OPINII MŁODZIEŻY. PROBLEM SYMETRYCZNOŚCI WYPOWIEDZI W ANALIZIE SOCJOLOGICZNEJ I TEKSTOLOGICZNEJ

### Abstrakt

W artykule opisana jest kategoria tzw. symetryczności. Jako zjawisko o typologii lingwistycznej zagadnienie to pojawia się przede wszystkim w badaniach nad grzecznością językową. W refleksji ściśle tekstologicznej symetryczność odpowiada za określoną konstrukcję wypowiedzi. Dzięki niej w procesie komunikacji można zapobiegać różnicom pomiędzy porozumiewającymi się podmiotami. Rozbieżności te mogą dotyczyć statusu społecznego lub zawodowego rozmówców, ich zróżnicowanej hierarchii społecznej czy zasobów wiedzy, jakimi dysponują. Konieczność aplikowania opisywanego narzędzia w homiletyce wynika przede wszystkim z przeprowadzonych badań socjologicznych (zebranych zostało blisko 1,4 tys. ankiet). Wyniki prezentują bowiem szereg braków w procesie wymiany myśli, jaki powinien dokonywać się w czasie liturgii. W przypadku homilii osiągnięcie

symetryczności zostanie zaprezentowane w następującym porządku: Po pierwsze w odniesieniu do zachowania dialogiczności struktury głoszonego słowa, po drugie w możliwie precyzyjnym określeniu tzw. *questio* homilii.

**Słowa kluczowe:** badania jakościowe, homilia, komunikacja, socjologia religii, symetryczność, tekst

## INTRODUCTION

Reflection symmetry, translational symmetry or actinomorphic symmetry – these are various kinds of symmetry in mathematics and biology. However, the category of symmetry is also used in architecture, urban planning or chemistry. Interestingly, ‘symmetry’ appears also in linguistic studies, including textual linguistics, a field that has been developing since the mid-twentieth century. It is in textology, that is a study of rules of language construction beyond the boundaries of a sentence, that the Greek category of *συμμετρία* may be applied. Accordingly, ‘measure’ and ‘proportional construction’ pose an opportunity to make a proper utterance. Consequently, symmetry may be a useful tool also in homiletics.

Our aim is to give a clear instruction on how to prepare a homily as far as its content is concerned. We assume that preaching during liturgy should be symmetrical: ‘the measure’ of the sermon should respond to the needs of a given audience. The empirical studies, which reveal multiple observations regarding preaching (ca. 1400 completed questionnaires), are the starting point for our analysis. As a response, we propose a specific textual tool for those who write homilies.

The article has the following structure: 1. We discuss the sociological study conducted, its method and designated target audience, and explain the categorization adopted. 2. We show the results of the research and discuss issues that result from the answers given in the questionnaires. The answers will be divided into sets according to the problem they raise (which means grouping them according to a specific semantic key). As a result, it will be possible to suggest a precise tool to be used while preparing a sermon. 3. We will describe the meaning of symmetry in ‘the exchange of thoughts’ between subjects. Then, in the practical section of our study, we will show the homily as a kind of speech which should include symmetry (4). In order to achieve it, the homily should have an adequate dialogical structure (4.1.). Moreover, it should have a precisely defined *questio* (4.2.).

## 1. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The empirical study presented below was conducted from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> June 2020. It was the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, which influenced the way the study was carried out. Secondary school students were asked to complete the online questionnaire ‘Ksiądz w świadomości polskiej młodzieży 2020 r.’ (The Priest in the Eyes of the Polish Youth in 2020; Adamczyk 2020) which consisted of 25 questions, both open-ended and closed-ended. They mainly concerned



clergymen, the way they run their functions and perform their duties. Additionally, the questions concerned religiousness and morality of the young respondents. It was purposeful sampling. The questionnaire was available at Google and the link to it was sent to students with the approval of their headmasters, teachers and various educational institutions. 1396 completed questionnaires came from 15 voivodeships (except the Lubusz Voivodeship). The average time of filling in the questionnaire was ca. 30 minutes. 746 women (53,4%) and 650 men (46,7%) took part in the study. These were: high school students (47,3%), technical schools students (39,9%) and students of vocational schools of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> degree (12,8%). Among them, 82,1% attend religion classes and 17,9% do not. Almost half of the respondents live in rural areas (42,3%), almost every third respondent (32,0%) lives in a town with a population up to 100 000 (32,0%), and every fourth respondent (25,6%) lives in a city with a population over 100 000. The study as a whole makes it possible to formulate a number of conclusions. We will focus only on one aspect of the study, i.e. giving sermons.

## 2. THE RESULTS OF THE SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

The subject of our sociological analysis is the question: 'What do you dislike most in the homilies you hear?' (Adamczyk 2020, 164-174). It was an open-end question, i.e. the respondents could answer freely. Thus very rich data for analysis was collected – over 50 pages of diverse opinions about the homily. It is worth emphasizing that the youth did not evaluate it only negatively, but enumerated its positive elements as well. The collected data was grouped into ten thematic categories. The answers given most often are in the following three categories: 'I don't know' or 'It is hard to say' (26,9%); 'the priest's aggressiveness while preaching the homily' or 'lack of tolerance' (17,7%); and '[raising] political issues' (15,3%). Significantly, a number of respondents did not know what the homily was (33 interviewees admitted this explicitly).

The above categories will now be differentiated with independent variables (gender, type of school, place of residence, participation in religion classes). 'Gender' is the independent variable which significantly statistically differentiated four categories of answers. The girls more often than boys pointed to the lack of acceptance, tolerance and aggressiveness in the homilies (21,2% to 13,7%;  $p = 0,0001$ , Cramér's  $V = 0,097$ )<sup>1</sup>. Also, they emphasized the inappropriate language

---

<sup>1</sup> For the above statistical analysis the chi-square test was used which helps determine the association between the analyzed variables on the basis of the frequency distribution of responses. Cramér's test was used to show the strength of this association. We describe only these independent variables which, correlated with the dependent variables, had a significant statistical association confirmed by chi square i.e.  $p \leq 0,05$ . The strength of the association between the independent and the dependent variables, determined by the Cramér's test, can be read individually with the following ranges of values: 0-0,2 – very weak association, 0,2-0,4 – weak association, 0,4-0,6 – moderate association, 0,6-0,8 – strong association, 0,8-1 – very strong association.

used (8,6% to 4,5%;  $p = 0,002$ , Cramér's  $V = 0,082$ ). The boys more often than the girls spoke positively about the homilies (12,2% to 8,2%;  $p = 0,012$ , Cramér's  $V = 0,067$ ). However, they also admitted: 'I don't go to church, I don't listen to homilies' (12,2% to 7,4%;  $p = 0,002$ , Cramér's  $V = 0,082$ ).

The 'type of school' was the variable which most often and substantively differentiated the interviewees. The students of vocational schools spoke positively about the homilies more often than the students of technical schools and high schools (15,6%, 10,8%, 7,9%;  $p = 0,006$ , Cramér's  $V = 0,085$ ). The latter, on the other hand, more often found the homilies boring (10,5%, 9,7%, 6,2%;  $p = 0,027$ , Cramér's  $V = 0,072$ ). They also criticized raising political issues (19,7%, 12,2%, 8,4%;  $p = 0,0001$ , Cramér's  $V = 0,122$ ), deviating from the topic (5,0%, 2,0%, 1,1%;  $p = 0,0001$ , Cramér's  $V = 0,126$ ) and showing lack of tolerance or aggressiveness (22,0%, 15,4%, 8,9%;  $p = 0,0001$ , Cramér's  $V = 0,117$ ). The independent variable 'place of residence' did not exert any statistically significant influence on any category, which is also symptomatic. As for the independent variable 'participation in religion classes,' two categories are significantly differentiated: students who attend religion classes, more frequently than those who do not, disapprove of the length of sermons (11,1% to 4,4%;  $p = 0,008$ , Cramér's  $V = 0,071$ ). The higher rate of the answer 'I don't listen, I don't go to church' refers to students who do not participate in religion classes (20,0% to 7,3%;  $p = 0,0001$ , Cramér's  $V = 0,163$ ).

We are going to quote verbatim certain remarks of the respondents regarding preaching the word of God. They play a crucial role in our study. Intolerance and aggressiveness are the flaws most often condemned by the youth (17,7%). It is the criticism and exclusion of non-heteronormative people that the young are especially sensitive to: 'Intolerance towards people who are not like the ideal of a Christian (LGBTQ+ and people who «shack up»), the sermons are dull, they do not convey any values. The Church will start functioning, when she starts to adhere to her own guidance: let us be charitable and understanding;)' 'we are told to respect our neighbor while [they] humiliate people of a different faith, skin color and sexual orientation;' 'the fact that immediately after reading the Word of God, there is stigmatizing and referring to homosexuality, abortion and other issues which are irrelevant;' 'I think that those who give sermons should not impose their views on the faithful. I don't like it when other people, because of their sexual orientation, are excluded from the community, or when hatred towards them is publicly expressed. Thus the Church becomes a place where many people don't feel secure - because of the opinions of some clergy/priests who are supposed to lead us toward God, they feel inferior, unloved and rejected by God;' 'I hate it when people who are not heterosexual are spoken ill of. Why do you despise us? Every human being is different. Heterosexual people and those who go to church often sin more. Moreover, they do not have any respect for others. Jealousy, avarice - unfortunately, these are the traits of many people, even heterosexual or pseudo-believers. I also hate it when politics is discussed during sermons. The Church

should not be allowed to refer to it;’ ‘supporting PiS [Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, ‘Law and Justice’ party]<sup>2</sup>, siege mentality which is unwarranted in the case of the Polish reality; dehumanizing other people e.g. homosexuals (I understand that homosexuality is thought to be a sin. However, [the Church] should reach out to them, and not call them *pest*);’ ‘discussing homosexuality, in-vitro fertilization, politics, contraception, abortion and other ideological issues during sermons. Using this for little coaxing. The argumentation leaves no choice: either you stand by the Church or you are out while your eternal salvation is at stake.’

The youth who took part in the study also pointed to the language full of hatred and aggressive attitude toward people who think differently or certain groups. This was evaluated as improper in the Church - a potential source of social conflicts and divisions: ‘The faithful may mistake and misinterpret it (which may sometimes be the intention), which may give rise to socio-political conflicts;’ ‘Interfering in political matters and expressing one’s private opinions on controversial and divisive issues (such as faith, sexual orientation etc.);’ ‘sharing one’s political views which are thus imposed (and not every Christian belongs to the same political party). Preaching that we are equal and then humiliating people of, for example, different orientation. They are God’s children as well, and as such they deserve to be respected. Instead, we can hear words which encourage intolerance or stigmatize people because they are «different».’

The young have spoken in a similar vein about the hate speech and perpetuation of stereotypes: ‘Absurdities like: feminists are Satan (from experience);’ ‘talking politics and (latent) hate speech against people who have nothing to do with the Church;’ ‘they contain negative overtones as far as a certain group of people is concerned;’ ‘when difficult terminology is used, when the homilies insult people; talking politics, money and complaining about the decline of faith in the parish, about lack of money for construction, for paying for the energy etc. If the sermon is read, you can sense boredom and lack of enthusiasm;’ ‘long sermons ‘about nothing’, talking politics, ridiculing and pouncing on people who think or dress in a different way; saying things which are inconsistent with the Church’s teaching;’ ‘bringing up political, ideological etc. threads thus going too far afield; stereotypes, judging and tagging people.’

The young respondents have also found lack of empathy and oppressive, purely negative teaching to be aggressive: ‘threatening instead of positive message;’ ‘preaching only negative vision of our life on earth;’ ‘emphasizing only the sins that people commit; little focus on charity and tolerance of one’s neighbor;’ ‘voicing grievances against people for everything.’ The youth also seem repulsed by the lack of considerateness and empathy: ‘The priest gives as an example people he knows and their issues. However, they would not like to reveal these issues;’ ‘during a homily the priest tells the parishioners that they do not go to church, or divides them: «those in the vestibule have apparently come to stand by». In my opinion,

<sup>2</sup> Prawo i Sprawiedliwość [Law and Justice] is the right-wing ruling party in Poland.

if someone came to church, then, even if they stand outside, they must have had some inspiration or good intentions;’ ‘public pouncing on people, emphasizing their faults and mocking them;’ ‘lack of understanding for certain people. Their behavior may result from difficult situations of e.g. personal character of which priests haven’t got a clue.’

The preacher’s self-exaltation and superiority is yet another trait that has been badly received: ‘Setting oneself as a noble example (I experienced this rarely, though this helps you to see quite swiftly whether this is his vocation or ‘profession’);’ ‘putting oneself as a role model;’ ‘showing superiority over the people;’ ‘I don’t like it when they repeat the same thing over and over again, and when they talk to people: «you are not allowed» etc. The fact that he’s a priest doesn’t mean he’s better. He should identify with the believers as he’s a human being who commits sins just like we do.’

Imposing personal opinions (of non-religious character in particular) has also met with criticism. According to the youth, using the pulpit to state one’s own opinions e.g. political ones (over 15% of respondents disapprove of talking politics during sermons) has nothing to do with the mission of the Church and, as such, is not legitimate. ‘They [sermons] don’t concern religious issues but political and ideological ones. The priests use the sermon as an opportunity to impose their backward, intolerant views instead of preaching the Gospel;’ ‘among others: discriminating against people, judging and imposing their own opinions e.g. by forbidding us to give money to WOŚP;<sup>3</sup>’ ‘[the homily] is based on subjective views of the priest;’ ‘talking about one’s personal opinions or imposing them, suggesting that one’s own approach is the only legitimate one;’ ‘statements that, to a large degree, are inconsistent with the Church’s teaching;’ ‘very often these are his personal, pseudo-motivational opinions.’

According to the respondents, lack of sufficient knowledge about the topics referred to, or alluding to false authorities is yet another weak point of the homily. ‘What I hate most is when the person who delivers a sermon refers to verdicts, assumptions or views of people of higher rank though they have no relevant knowledge or background;’ ‘dragging in unsubstantiated theses (e.g. denying evolution), engaging in politics, attacking other faiths or non-believers;’ ‘assigning specific gender roles;’ ‘sometimes they discuss stereotypes about which they don’t know much.’

The study revealed that 15% of respondents did not have any opinion on the homily, or did not listen to it and stayed uninterested (‘It is not that I don’t like them. They don’t bother me, but I rarely listen.’). However, the majority of students gave specific, often comprehensive answers, which means they are both insightful

---

<sup>3</sup> WOŚP, Wielka Orkiestra Świątecznej Pomocy [the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity] is the biggest, non-governmental charity organization in Poland which raises money for e.g. pediatric and elderly care. However, due to certain controversial remarks of its founder, Jerzy Owsiak, it is not approved by some leaders of the Catholic Church in Poland.

and critical audience. Some of them considered lack of commitment a weak point of the sermons. 'I think the homilies should be inspired, they should be surprising and give us examples, like those given by Rev. Piotr Glas, Rev. Piotr Pawlukiewicz or Rev. Grzegorz Ryś. [The priests] should talk to people so that they understand and can identify with what is said. That's why I don't like stereotypical «droning on», discussing something that is virtually irrelevant or presenting important issues tediously;' 'when the priest preaches as if he wanted simply to rattle through it unthinkingly and go home;' 'when they are not spoken from the heart;' 'no commitment, talking as if to oneself, not to the people;' 'treating the homily as an obligation, not a means to teach and understand the faith and the Bible;' 'I don't know, I guess when I was taking part in religious practices (just like every person in Poland until they're around 12 years old), it was the complete lack of an effort to attract people's interest. Or, perhaps, this is how I saw it when I was a snot.'

The above thread is related to yet another objection: lack of preparation and background or reading 'ready-made texts.' When a priest reads his sermon from a sheet of paper, it does not engage the audience: 'It gets on my nerves when the sermon is read out mechanically. The priest should speak for himself on the basis of his own feelings – it's more natural, it reduces the distance between the priest and the penitent, one listens to it more eagerly as it touches you more than a dry text. Sermons should not be long, they should be to the point, otherwise you tune out after a few minutes, especially when the sermon is read out from a piece of paper.'

When the priest has not thought over the content of the sermon, he speaks chaotically and deviates from the main topic, which distracts the listeners: 'Some give the sermon sloppily, with no preparation;' 'the fact that [homilies] are not prepared (at least a little bit), which makes them hard to listen to;' 'having no background and speaking chaotically;' 'no specific content, just a million pointless case studies;' 'deviating from the topic and padding out the sermon which becomes boring. There are often dozens of threads, and it is difficult to draw conclusions;' 'Too many stories are woven [into the homily], so that you get bored and after leaving the church you don't even remember what the homily was about;' 'when they deviate from the main track. I mean, stories and midrashes are interesting, on condition that there are not too many of them.'

According to some respondents, lack of specific message or a keynote is a similar drawback of homilies they hear: 'Cliches, no specifics, no fluidity;' 'talking nonsense,' 'humdrum, preaching nice slogans, no explanations. They don't familiarize us with the Catholic teaching, instead [we hear] unclear wording, no substance or specifics;' '[the homilies] are often abstract; the priest does not talk about an issue of which he is certain. Instead, he falters, which makes it difficult to grasp the sermon and remember it;' 'vague or nonsensical sermons (once I heard a homily in which the faithful are compared to a dishwasher).'

The study reveals that students do not accept focusing on trivial issues that are irrelevant to the spiritual growth of the faithful: 'Focus on unimportant elements

of faith, sometimes even beyond its scope. Thus spreading intolerance and hatred, stupidity and faith which is not rooted in charity or kindness;’ ‘tackling themes like politics, LGBT, anything apart from history and the Gospel;’ ‘when priests deviate from the topic of faith to political, material etc. issues.’

Another objection regarded the monotony and repetitiveness of the sermon which is often thought to be too long. The respondents have put it laconically: ‘a yawn.’ Obviously, these traits do not help absorb the message of the sermon. On the contrary, the attention of the audience begins to wander: ‘They are often so protracted that you want to go to sleep;’ ‘sometimes they last too long (even 45 minutes), so that the faithful stop listening and do not learn much from a given homily;’ ‘they are too long, they should be to the point and thought-provoking;’ ‘repetitiveness and discussing various situations with the same words;’ ‘speaking schematically, using the same, old cliches instead of the truth about God or faith, which often results from the lack of knowledge;’ ‘superficial rambling on about the same thing for a long time, without delving into the matter or trying to show the issue in a creative manner;’ ‘chuntering, too long;’ ‘the homilies are too verbose – their content could be conveyed in a short statement. Thus you easily get distracted, you wander and start thinking about something else;’ ‘inaccessible, boring, fictional learning;’ ‘no ability to hold the listeners’ attention;’ ‘the statements are typical – you have already heard them; moreover, they are too long and send you to sleep;’ ‘style over substance sometimes: the priest may talk long but not necessarily about relevant issues; or he repeats what he has already said. It is only a general impression, I do not mean any specific clergyman.’

Another flaw of the sermon is the wrong language used: too much specialized vocabulary, incomprehensible terminology, unnatural tone of voice, tortuous statements and the language not adapted to a specific group of listeners. Therefore, the respondents wrote: ‘Evading difficult issues, beating about the bush, no profound thoughts, convoluted and unclear speaking;’ ‘incomprehensible and recondite preaching;’ ‘terminology is too academic/theological;’ ‘the language is ponderous;’ ‘turgidity;’ ‘affectation;’ ‘The priest shouts while preaching;’ ‘waxing philosophically;’ ‘stupid comparisons;’ ‘sometimes they are inadequate for a given audience;’ ‘lack of suitable vocabulary in a given message;’ ‘sentimentality, speaking as if to children and women; theological errors, conniving at sins;’ ‘too long homilies with infantile anecdotes.’

The respondents also pointed to the way a priest communicates with young people. He is thought to have narrow views, use old-fashioned and artificial language, not keep up with modern times and have no charisma to work with the young: ‘Some priests cannot approach young people;’ ‘they shut themselves off from what is new;’ ‘backward’ ‘narrow-minded;’ ‘young people find them difficult to understand;’ ‘the fact that [sermons] are dedicated typically to the elderly, to match their viewpoints so that they will agree with what is said;’ ‘They are old fashioned and dull, so that I forget them quickly;’ ‘they are inconsistent and

outdated;’ ‘the comparisons are out of the ark, there are political and financial questions woven into.’

It turns out that young people expect the homilies to be about the Gospel and the principles of faith. Therefore, many objections concern deviations from this expectation: ‘they not always refer to the reading;’ ‘when the priest instead of discussing the Gospel or the reading, refers to what he has seen on the Internet, Facebook or Twitter. He often alludes to politics;’ ‘for me a sermon should explain the Gospel, I do not like it when there is no such reference whatsoever;’ ‘superficiality and deviating from the Gospel and reading of the day;’ ‘there should be even more emphasis on the significance of the Holy Scripture;’ ‘adding themes that are not related to a given excerpt from the Bible;’ ‘the fact that they do not refer to the Holy Scripture;’ ‘weaving other, unrelated topics into the sermon;’ ‘the priest harps on issues unrelated to the reading, adds topics he should not discuss;’ ‘alluding to situations from the priest’s life but who cares whom he met and talked to?’

Some respondents would like the homilies to refer to everyday life and contain specific guidelines which could be used on a daily basis: ‘poor reference to present issues;’ ‘they are sometimes boring and you can get nothing from them for yourself;’ ‘a priest gives a sermon that hardly relates to my life;’ ‘no reference to current matters which could be discussed in an interesting way. Being often detached from the situation in Poland/in the world. Not addressing the issues of religion/faith;’ ‘References to politics, money; giving advice that you cannot put into practice.’

It is worth noting that 10% of respondents do not have any objections and evaluate the homilies positively. Their opinion may be helpful to those who would like to communicate with the youth effectively: ‘The priest never alludes to political issues, which I like a lot. A huge advantage is that he talks quite colloquially and humorously so that everyone understands him. My experience is very positive;’ ‘Hard to say... I think the homily is very good when Jesus is in its center.’

### 3. SYMMETRY AS A TRAIT OF A SPEECH

When we try to address – within the framework of textual studies – the above postulates and observations, we face the risk of repeating trite solutions. In works on formal homiletics, they clues focus on e.g. the need to use specific language and avoid theological jargon. Moreover, they stress the necessity to apply a style which should guarantee that the content of the homily is well received. However, our aim is to suggest a systemic solution which should trigger off the process of changing one’s way of thinking already at the stage of preparing a sermon. We will apply the linguistic criterion of symmetry which occurs in linguistic studies (though it is not often analyzed). The Latin *symmetria* and Greek *συμμετρία* may help explain the etymology of ‘symmetry’. The words consist of two parts: prefix *sym* is understood as ‘together’, ‘collectively’, and *metron* means ‘measure’, ‘weight’, ‘rule’ (Jurewicz 2001, 334).

As yet, the issue of symmetry of the text has not gained much attention. In studies of communication we may find an interpretation according to which symmetry is related to the so-called 'linguistic politeness' which defines the relation of the subjects who dialogue. Closeness between interlocutors is the essence of the so-called solidarity politeness system which makes it possible for the symmetrical exchange of thoughts to be achieved and maintained.<sup>4</sup> This may occur when the two parties are highly engaged in the dialogue as it happens in the exchange of thoughts between friends (Żurek 2008, 38).

In linguistics, symmetry in a dialogue boils down to specifying the linguistic behavior of the interlocutors and their social roles. This concept can be contrasted with 'asymmetry' which is also linguistically studied. In the latter, we deal with the differences of the social and professional status of interlocutors (1), differences in the social hierarchy (2) as well as various knowledge levels of the interlocutors when they exchange information (3). This typology may be semantically rendered in a different way. However, the fact remains that many factors such as: gender, age, institutional norms and social roles may influence asymmetry of the communication process (Baranowski 2016, 45-48).<sup>5</sup>

Apart from the above situation of 'linguistic politeness,' the concept of symmetry also refers to the semantic or syntactic forms of a given message. In this case certain lexical units are repeated, primarily in adjacent sentences and paragraphs (Gajda 2014, 10). The issue of semantics is also present in a different approach to symmetry. It concerns expectations of a given content: the recipient has the right to expect that the 'sender' will share all the knowledge that he/she has (Prokop 2010, 15). Thus, there is no place for leaving something unsaid, hinting at something or excessive presuppositions which listeners may interpret as semantic gaps.

It seems that the concept of symmetry may be crucial for the exchange of thoughts as it engages effective transmission of information. It may also help succeed in achieving our objective: listeners may be willing to take up verbal directives they hear.

---

<sup>4</sup> We do not mean a rank in society (the so-called *deference politeness system*) or a strictly hierarchical system in the case of subordinates and superiors (*hierarchical politeness system*) (Żurek 2008, 38).

<sup>5</sup> We shall give examples to illustrate the division. Different knowledge levels usually occur in the communication between a pupil and a teacher, a student and a professor (3). A different status of interlocutors: employer – employee, parent – child, doctor – patient (1). Generally, this range of asymmetry is present in all institutions (organizations or groups) which are based on formalized rules of membership (e.g. lieutenant – sergeant; abbot – monk). Defining asymmetry in communication between subjects of various social background may be problematic (2). Social norms in totalitarian systems may serve as an example: certain members are discriminated against because of their nationality, social class, religion, worldview or beliefs. This can give rise to lack of symmetry in communication. In the past, it was the monarchy where one could experience lack of symmetry in communication. The dependency of vassal on the lord is a characteristic example of social differentiation. Nowadays the relationship between an elderly person and a child may be considered socially asymmetrical.



#### 4. SYMMETRY IN THE HOMILY

While analyzing the issue of symmetry, we need to emphasize that it is not a fixed property: in speech it is a variable category (Prokop 2010, 17). This shows in the liturgical proclamation of the Word which consists of what is written down (which is not a homily yet) and the living transmission of the Word. It inherits its processual character from the text. According to Anna Duszak, 'here the text is not a product, but a process which is dynamic. It is controlled by those who take part in the act of communication' (Duszak 1998, 18). In the case of spreading the Word of God in the liturgy, it is the 'sender' who primarily impacts processuality of the sermon. However, the listeners may show (lack of) interest in what he says, which impacts the course of speech and thus the process of conveying meanings. Naturally, their interest relates to the engagement and commitment of the preacher. As such, it directly implies the criteria of linguistic symmetry.

##### 4.1. The dialogical character of speech (structural symmetry)

In the textual reflection on the homily, we should once again emphasize the dialogical tradition. Accordingly, the method of shaping one's speech results from the genre of preaching during liturgy, which is related to the tradition of the Greek diatribe. The diatribe directly involved exchanging thoughts and conversing (Dyk, Klementowicz, and Wprostkiewicz 2019, 20-22). In the homily, therefore, theological issues should be transferred between the subjects in the so-called 'dialogical paradigm' which is not obvious in the case of preaching. What may contribute to a dialogue if one silent interlocutor passively receives what is said? It is worth underlying that preaching during the liturgy, while remaining in the convention of a dialogue, is asymmetrical (Warchala 1991, 19). Firstly, because it is a form of institutional communication, even though an exchange of thoughts may occur. The homilist is the only one entitled to transfer meaning to the recipient. Secondly, asymmetry increases due to the fact that interaction on the part of the listener is limited. Apart from Masses for children, dialogue during the homily is only apparent. Also, what highly contributes to asymmetry is the fact that partners in this dialogue are unequal because of their various backgrounds and knowledge of the subject – only the homilist has sufficient substantive competence in the topic he raises (Prokop 2010, 16-18).

However, there is an opportunity in attempting to achieve symmetry in a speech. In line with the precept of 'linguistic politeness,' one ought to address the interlocutor with respect. In practice, this rule boils down to the following: 'try to minimize the costs of others, and maximize their benefits, where 'cost' is understood as an effort put to realize the objective of the message' (Jabłońska-Bonca, and Zeidler 2016, 122). This approach is not only about showing respect to the listeners. It is also related to constructing an adequate argumentation of the homily which is to make the content plausible. However, the ultimate decision (resolution) in terms of faith (the mystery) is in the hands of the recipient. The accusations of being 'aggressive',

‘excluding’ or ‘ruling on matters overbearingly’ bring to mind the traits of eristic.<sup>6</sup> This is related to perceiving the homilist as someone who ‘exalts himself and puts himself above the community’ (an excerpt from one of the answers), which directly implies asymmetrical speech. Dariusz Baranowski sees this situation as a manifestation of power in which one party wants to achieve their communication objectives by means of coercion or pressure (Baranowski 2016, 45). However, the eristic victory is only seeming, for, as a result, we get ostentatious airing one’s rationale and defeating ‘the opponents.’ Consequently, they distance themselves from the preacher, which their answers prove.

Proper justification of one’s points should be based on a dialogue with listeners. Only then can the latter be motivated to transform their attitudes and convictions. When the priest invites the listeners to join him in his thinking and search for solutions together, he lends credence to his rationale. However, it is up to the recipient whether he is convinced by the homilist’s justification of his thesis. Imposing solutions means violating the rule of symmetry. Similarly, projecting ‘ready-made’ or ‘universal’ ideas may backfire because the spiritual life is an extremely sensitive sphere, in young people in particular.<sup>7</sup> Their answers in the questionnaire reflect standardized or formulaic form of communication in the Church.

As for the conflict between the message of the Revelation and the views of young people, their answers seem, paradoxically, positive.

The Latin word *conflictus* means ‘clash,’ ‘incompatibility,’ ‘collision,’ ‘fight.’ Interestingly, these meanings help open oneself to a dialogue which, in the form of symmetrical exchange of thoughts, is an opportunity to eliminate what is ‘conflicting’ or what is the subject of ‘a clash.’ We may once again return to the idea of processual presentation of ideas when the preacher is in dialogue with the listener. The first should invite the latter in a conversational mode to recognize various ideas (potential solutions). Strategically planned order of thinking is pivotal for the dialogue. If, in line with the idea of symmetry, the priest wants to show listeners respect, he should reveal potential proposals which cannot be imposed but presented in the form of argumentation. Thus the sermon may be symmetrical, as his thinking will no longer have strong overtones of institutional communication. Furthermore, it will reduce substantive disproportion between listeners and a preacher – the first are not as competent in the field of theology as the latter.

---

<sup>6</sup> We may assume that certain elements of homilies which the respondents evaluated as aggressive or intolerant are *ad rem* statements (i.e. they refer to issues, problems) rather than *contra personam* (against a person or a social group). This is our assumption. However, the answers clearly indicate that certain statements violate the norms of linguistic politeness.

<sup>7</sup> This approach directly affects the chances that the listeners apply recommendations that result from the Revelation (the so-called directive speech acts). The homilist’s imperatives will be put into practice only if the recipient agrees to do this (argumentation that makes the issues raised plausible increases the chances that he will). Aggressiveness, exclusion or hatred should, therefore, be seen as serious flaws of preaching as they directly affect the possibility of realizing the objectives of the preacher’s message.

#### 4.2. Defining *questio* of the speech (substantive symmetry)

Symmetry may be also achieved by paying attention to real problems of the listeners. Theologically speaking, it is 'updating the kerygma,' *aggiornamento* of the message of Revelation. However, this condition is not sufficient. Presenting Biblical issues rationally should go hand in hand with showing them in such a way that they relate to the lives of the listeners. Then the 'text' has an adequate substantive measure. If, on the other hand, the faithful find the issue or *casus* of the preacher's speech irrelevant, then they may disregard the message. On the linguistic level, in such circumstances there is no chance that 'discursive community' appears (Klementowicz 2022, 56-60). And it is not about the semiotics of expressions or terms used. What matters is the relationship of dialogue partners. On the way to mutual understanding, there should be compatibility between them as regards the issue discussed by the preacher together with a case that is close to the listener. This directly results in the symmetry (substantive measure) of the speech.

The questionnaire reveals that the young often find the homilies 'tedious.' They have also admitted that issues raised by the preacher 'have nothing to do with me.' This is obviously a flaw of the preacher's *actio*. The respondents wrote that '[the homilies] are often abstract; the priest does not talk about an issue of which he is certain. Instead, he falters, which makes it difficult to grasp the sermon and remember it.' Moreover, the respondents complained that it is 'humdrum, preaching nice slogans, no explanations. They do not familiarize us with the Catholic teaching, instead [we hear] unclear wording, no substance or specifics.' There were also remarks that 'sermons are vague, nonsensical,' or '[show] lack of preparation or [are full of] chaotic statements.' These answers point to the problem of competently raising issues that the listeners would find noteworthy, essential in their lives.

Ancient Greek rhetoricians may give us food for thought here. The subject of their speeches was called 'status of the case' (*status causae*). Accordingly, the topics discussed by a rhetorician should not be 'abstract,' but consonant with *status causae* of the listener (Arduini, and Damiani 2010, 169). Ryszard Hajduk remarks that the above observations may be summed up in the phrase *mea res agitur* [my affairs are at issue]. Thus the listener is/becomes convinced that the preacher is addressing an important (crucial) issue of his. In other words, that the preacher reacts to what is relevant to the listener (Hajduk 2019, 61).

Interestingly, the precept of 'the measure of the text,' that is its symmetry, applies to the topic of the speech as well. A proportionate text should focus on matters that are pivotal to the recipient. This concept is developed by Małgorzata Marcjanik who writes about two key principles regarding symmetry. The first says that we should generally show respect to our partner in a dialogue while belittling ourselves. The second principle concerns being interested in matters that are important to my dialogue partner (Marcjanik 2001, 85). The above observations may be applied while preparing a homily. In order for the homily to be useful, it must raise issues which are crucial to the listener. As a result, there will be symmetry

of both parties during the exchange of information. This action may be called 'coherent (global) proportionality.' In this case, proportionally to the preacher's effort (spotting the problem, constructing the message properly, ordering meanings in a comprehensible way), the chances of attracting the listeners' interest increase. It is also an opportunity to improve the reception of the content. Thus not only a dialogue is initiated but, as a manifestation of linguistic politeness, the criterion of proportion i.e. symmetry between partners, is achieved.

The very construction of *questio* allows for yet another observation. Even though the topic raised will respond to the listeners' dilemmas, not every theological 'solution' will be clear. Therefore, the so-called application of theology (i.e. the answer) should be as precise as it is possible in order to maintain symmetry. This also applies to directive speech acts.

Searching for symmetry in such cases aims to address the respondents' complaints, for example: 'I couldn't understand the preacher's message;' 'the justification was vague;' or even '[he was] evading precise explanation of an issue.' Thus, highly desirable features of a message are: clarity, conciseness and comprehensibility.

Ordering a comprehensible speech requires multiple creative steps. For example, the preacher must be 'imaginatively engaged.' His ingenuity and looking for ways to reach out to the listener is in the system of linguistic politeness compared to a dialogue of friends (Żurek 2008, 38). Their closeness makes them do their best to 'reach' out to each other. In the case of the homily, it is the preacher's task to spare no effort to reach out to the listeners so that they feel he wants mutual understanding. However, his focus should not be on the style solely. His creativity should involve, for example, intertextuality: in order to make the issues of the kerygma or Revelation more approachable, he can make use of texts with theological content. In practice, this would mean employing threads from literature, film or broadly understood fine arts (Klementowicz 2019, 58-61).

## CONCLUSION

The above systematization combines conclusions from various academic fields. Different methodologies of sociology and textual linguistics (and, as far as conclusions are concerned, also theology) allow, however, to draw coherent conclusions. According to Wiesław Przyczyna and Gerard Siwek these inferences can help practice homiletics in an interdisciplinary way, especially when it comes to applying specific empirical data (Przyczyna, and Siwek 2007, 294).

The study of young people's religiosity has revealed shortcomings in their education – a number of the interviewees could not tell what 'a homily' means. This may imply a flaw in teaching religion at school separately from the life of a given parish or Church liturgy (which is confirmed by other sociological research). At the same time, the interviewees who listen to homilies have spoken of their spiritual longings which

they would like to deepen with the help of preachers' explanations of source texts and the Holy Scripture. They have suggested that Church sermons should give more food for thought and personal quest, not impose ready-made solutions. Young interviewees appear to need a dialogue that relates to their lives, helps interpret reality in the context of faith, support them in difficult situations and improve their spiritual and religious formation. Their answers to the questionnaire reveal that they appreciate empathy and openness towards other people, including those whose take on life is different than the one advocated by the Church. They expect a dialogue and considerateness, not critique or arbitrary exclusion from the Church.

The above sociological studies also show that young people do not accept aggressive forms of communication, insults and remarks of political or economic character in the Church. In their eyes, they go against her mission and the message of the Gospel. The young, therefore, expect preachers to focus on religious matters. They do not, however, accept passively what they hear, even when it is officially proclaimed in the Church – they are critical listeners who raise objections not only to the form of preaching but to the content as well. Hence, improving forms of preaching, adapting them to various audiences is a true challenge to the homilists.

It is worth noting that the above reflections refer to the studies of negative elements of homilies, which paints a gloomy picture. It would be worth conducting sociological studies that could complement this one-sided point of view with positive aspects of homilies. In this respect, sociological analysis needs to be supplemented.

The criteria of symmetry presented above do not exhaust the topic – there may be other answers given to the remarks made in response to the questionnaire. We have, however, suggested an operational tool which draws our attention to the ontology of the homily and helps control its delivery.

Linguistic symmetry, presented above as seeing to the dialogical character of communication and to its precisely defined *questio*, is part of a certain strategy. Our study may be complemented with other proposals that result from language politeness or other concepts from the fields of linguistics or rhetoric, which may give rise to a certain organizational culture of a speech. As a result, not only the message of the Bible may be more clearly conveyed. Also, the effects of preaching may improve. If listeners adhere to the directive speech acts (in theology the so-called moral imperatives), it will prove that preaching has been successful. This impacts relevancy, which is still an issue to be discussed as far as logical consistency of preaching is concerned.

#### REFERENCES:

- Adamczyk, Tomasz. 2020. *Autentyczność i duchowość. Księża w opinii polskiej młodzieży – analiza socjologiczna*. Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL.
- Arduini, Stefano and Matteo Damiani. 2010. *Dizionario di retorica*. Covilhã: Lab-Com Books.

- Baranowski, Dariusz. 2016. *Kultura organizacji z perspektywy lingwistycznej. Komunikacja pionowa – asymetria czy symetria?* Accessed by: 10.01.2022. [https://rebus.us.edu.pl/bitstream/20.500.12128/5896/1/Baranowski\\_Kultura\\_organizacji\\_z\\_perspektywy\\_lingwistycznej.pdf](https://rebus.us.edu.pl/bitstream/20.500.12128/5896/1/Baranowski_Kultura_organizacji_z_perspektywy_lingwistycznej.pdf). Doctoral dissertation defended at the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Silesia in Katowice.
- Duszak, Anna. 1998. *Tekst, dyskurs, komunikacja międzykulturowa*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Dyk, Stanisław, Michał Klementowicz, and Michał Wyrastkiewicz. 2019. *Słowo aktualne. Przepowiadanie a kwestie społeczne*. Gorzów Wielkopolski: Wydawnictwo Akademii im. Jakuba z Paradyża w Gorzowie Wielkopolskim.
- Gajda, Anetta. 2014. „Mechanizmy spójnościowe w dawnych tekstach popularnonaukowych.” In *Spójność tekstu specjalistycznego*, edited by Małgorzata Kornacka, 7-20. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Instytutu Kulturologii i Lingwistyki Antropocentrycznej.
- Hajduk, Ryszard. 2019. „Mea res agitur. Egzystencjalny aspekt przepowiadania homilijnego.” In *Homilia Integralna Studium treści przepowiadania homilijnego*, edited by Michał Dąbrówka, and Michał Klementowicz, 51-61. Tarnów: Wydawnictwo Biblos.
- Jabłońska-Bonca, Jolanta, and Kamil Zeidler. 2016. *Prawnik a sztuka retoryki i negocjacji* Warszawa: Wolters Kluwer.
- Klementowicz, Michał. 2022. „Dyskurs liturgiczny – uprzedmiotowienie zjawiska.” *Roczniki Teologiczne* 69/8: 53-68.
- Klementowicz, Michał. 2019. „Intertekstowość w homilii.” *Roczniki Teologiczne* 66/12: 53-64.
- Marcjanik, Małgorzata. 2001. *W kręgu grzeczności. Wybór prac z zakresu polskiej etykiety językowej*. Kielce: Wydawnictwo Akademii Świętokrzyskiej im. Jana Kochanowskiego.
- Prokop, Izabela. 2010. *Aspekty analizy pragmalingwistycznej*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza.
- Przyczyna, Wiesław, and Gerard Siwek. 2007. „O metodologii homiletyki.” *Studia Nauk Teologicznych* 2: 289-300.
- Słownik grecko-polski A-Ω*. Na podstawie słownika Zygmunta Węclewskiego opracował Oktawiusz Jurewicz. 2001. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Szkolne PWN.
- Warchala, Jacek. 1991. *Dialog potoczny a tekst*. Katowice: Wydawca Uniwersytet Śląski.
- Żurek, Anna. 2008. „Teorie grzeczności językowej.” *Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis. Kształcenie Językowe* 7/17: 33-43.



REV. ANDRZEJ ŁUCZYŃSKI

The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6409-3283> \* [luczynski@kul.pl](mailto:luczynski@kul.pl)

LIDIA PIETRUSZKA

The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1126-2749> \* [lidiapietruska@kul.pl](mailto:lidiapietruska@kul.pl)

Received: 12 Jan 2022; Reviewed: 10 Mai 2022; Accepted: 22 Nov 2022

## PHONOHOLISM AS A SIGN OF 'ALWAYS ON' GENERATION – RESEARCH REPORT

### Abstract

The article presents research on the risk of phonoholism occurring among high school students. Strong attachment to a cell phone, for many students, can be an indicator of serious problems. Thanks to utilizing in research the diagnostic survey method, 450 high school students, from all over Poland, could express their opinions on the dangers associated with using a mobile phone. Their opinions were analysed in terms of the ability to use a smartphone rationally, including the possibility of temporarily quitting or limiting the use of a mobile phone. Survey data analysis showed that students do not notice any negative effects of using a cell phone, at the same time they declare that functioning without a phone would be very difficult or even impossible for them. The results suggest that such risk do exist in some extent, for this reason, more emphasis should be placed on preventive measures that can help effectively to protect students against phonoholism.

**Keywords:** Youth, smartphone, addiction, phonoholism, 'always on'

## FONOHOLIZM JAKO ZNAK POKOLENIA „ALWAYS ON” – RAPORT Z BADAŃ

### Abstrakt

W artykule przedstawiono badania dotyczące zagrożenia fonoholizmem występującego wśród młodzieży szkół średnich. Silne przywiązanie do telefonu komórkowego może być dla wielu uczniów zwiastunem poważnych problemów. Dzięki wykorzystaniu w badaniach metody sondażu diagnostycznego 450 uczniów szkół średnich z terenu całej Polski mogło wyrazić swoje opinie na temat zagrożeń związanych z używaniem telefonu komórkowego. Ich opinie zostały przeanalizowane pod kątem umiejętności racjonalnego korzystania ze smartfonu, w tym czasowej możliwości rezygnacji lub ograniczenia używania telefonu komórkowego. Analiza danych z sondażu wykazała, iż

uczniowie nie dostrzegają u siebie negatywnych skutków korzystania z telefonu komórkowego, ale jednocześnie deklarują, iż funkcjonowanie bez telefonu byłoby dla nich bardzo trudne lub wręcz niemożliwe. Wyniki sugerują, że owo zagrożenie w pewnym stopniu występuje i dlatego większy nacisk należy położyć na działania profilaktyczne, które mogą pomóc skutecznie chronić uczniów przed fonoholizmem.

**Słowa kluczowe:** młodzież, telefon komórkowy, uzależnienie, fonoholizm, „always on”

## INTRODUCTION

Modern world offers young people many opportunities in terms of self-development, knowledge acquisition, as well as, establishing and maintaining social contacts. All this is possible mainly thanks to the mass media, among which the Internet has its dominant position together with its unlimited options practically in every sphere of life. Common access to digital media, largely in the mobile form, has a significant impact, especially on the young generation that succumbs to some kind of ‘magic’ of the virtual world. One of such mobile digital devices enabling young people to be always on is smartphone, which has become an inseparable ‘companion’ (gadget) of a young person (Strivastava 2005). Nowadays, young people commonly function between real and virtual world, where they satisfy their youthful needs, spend their free time, seek acceptance and build a sense of belonging (Gardner and Davis 2013). For young people, this means an indispensable need to be ‘always on’, which often leads to a limitation of their ‘face to face’ relationships and increases the risk of their addiction to the Internet and digital mobile devices (Billieux et al. 2015; Dębski 2017). Therefore, if a particular behaviour in life of an individual person has become compulsory and they do not have sufficient control over it, then we can talk about some form of physical but also mental dependence (Andrzejewska 2007; Foerster et al. 2015). This kind of problem is sometimes referred to as so-called behavioural addiction or activity addiction or technological addiction (Griffiths 1996; Rowicka 2015). However, among the researchers who study the discussed phenomenon, many different terms are used to describe it, e.g. ‘problematic mobile phone use’, ‘mobile phone dependence syndrome’, ‘mobile phone addiction’, ‘compulsive mobile phone use’, ‘dysfunctional use of the mobile phone’ (Guerreschi 2006; Pawłowska and Potembska 2011; Billieux 2012). There can also be found the term “nomophobia”, (abbreviation for no- mobile –phone- phobia), which signifies the fear of not having a phone within reach or fear of losing it (Bragazzi and Del Puente 2014). In research studies more and more often can be found the term ‘phonoholism’, which indicates the obsessive need for constant, insuppressible and more and more frequent using a mobile phone or at least having it within sight, which gives the sense of peace, otherwise, there is a sense of discomfort, sometimes also passivity, frustration, aggression, isolation (Belcer and Wojnarowska 2014, 41-43; Kozak 2013).

Frequent signals about abusing mobile phones by adolescents, coming from various educational environments, became an inspiration to undertake research on



the phenomenon of phonoholism among young people. The aim of such research was to get acquainted with the risk of phonoholism occurring among adolescents (students) of secondary schools. The research problem was expressed in the following question: What is the risk of phonoholism occurring among adolescents of secondary schools? In research, there was applied the diagnostic survey method utilizing the questionnaire technique and the research tool in the form of the survey questionnaire. The research was nationwide and was conducted online with the use of Google forms. 450 young respondents took part in the survey. The research results and the conducted analysis allowed to formulate interesting conclusions and observations, as well as, to put forward several pedagogical postulates aimed at the broadly understood social and educational environment.

### 1. PHONOHOLISM AS A NEW ADDICTION

Looking closer at the phenomenon of smartphone addiction, which has quite clearly taken root in the modern world, we want to show not only its nature but also the 'phenomenon' which enters the lives of many young people. Phonoholism as a behavioural disorder is experienced by those people who are not able to function normally without the constant presence (use) of a mobile phone (Dębski 2017, 14-17). When we think of the cause of this phenomenon, we come to the conclusion that it is not so simple to define it, since most often there occur several causes which are interrelated. Among the most frequently mentioned is the issue of unpleasant and painful experiences of adolescents in contact with others (parents, peers, teachers) and disturbed self-esteem (sense of otherness, lack of understanding, fear of loneliness, need for acceptance) (Takao 2014; Smetaniuk 2014). Perhaps, the mobile phone is also an escape from difficulties and school failures, lack of interests and boredom that creeps into life of a young person or is related to bad time management (Andrzejewska 2007, 1189). It can also be a way of expressing oneself and desire to impress others by being hyperactive on social media. The cause of addiction to the 'screen' is also bad family patterns (parents addicted to a smartphone) and the lack of ideas for spending free time together and building lasting family relationships. Another problem is the lack of 'digital education' on the part of parents and school (lack of rules for using digital media) and unlimited access to the Internet on a mobile device (Dębski 2017, 34-41). The emergence of this type of situation can lead young people to addiction, but as it is easy to notice, this is not only their problem but also those people whose duty it is to protect them from it. Young people, disappointed today with the world of adults which do not notice their needs and expectations, run away to virtual reality, where they try desperately to solve their problems and find suitable interlocutors.

Phonoholism in the life of a young person does not appear unexpectedly, but it is a gradual process successively growing stronger, which after some time becomes a real problem for a young person and their surroundings. The research conducted so far on the phenomenon of smartphone addiction allows us to distinguish its

several stages (phases). The first one is the so-called initial phase, its most common symptoms in adolescents are the increasing experience of the pleasure of being online, combined with a loss of sense of time and a growing desire to use the smartphone more and more often. In this way, the telephone becomes for young people an attractive “object” of interest and an entertainment centre, to which they gradually start to subordinate their daily functioning. In the next step, called the warning phase, a young person finds it difficult to part with his or her phone and insistently looks for opportunities to stay longer and longer on the Internet (frequent checking of notifications and favourite sites), they do it even in hiding, reducing, in this way, the emerging internal tension. The third phase, called critical, is already characterized by a significant loss of control over one’s own behaviour, which is “dominated” by the mobile phone. The phone becomes an inseparable companion of a young person who feels a sense of compulsion to use it, combined with neglect of rational nutrition, sleep and a decline in other interests not related to the network (learning, household chores, social meetings). In the case of limitation of access to the telephone reveals a whole spectrum of negative emotions (anxiety, irritation, nervousness, anger, fear), and also various types of conflicts and lies related to the use of a mobile phone. The last, so-called chronic phase (proper addiction), takes the form of an acute, even obsessive attachment to the telephone (being online), associated with constant readiness (regardless of time and place), to answer and reply to all kinds of messages, but also by means of a mobile phone to publish photos, videos, posts, build relations and converse. Moreover, keeping a phone around gives an addicted person a very high level of security, which is associated with ignoring and marginalizing other people in their environment and glorifying virtual reality. Over time, these symptoms deepen, “permanently” linking young people with a mobile phone, which gives them only the appearance of freedom and the possibility of choosing values, imposing on them specific patterns of choosing truth, good and beauty (Andrzejewska 2007; Jenaro et al. 2009).

Young people using mobile phones are well-versed in their numerous possibilities over time getting addicted to their preferred functions or smartphone applications. The common addictions related to the use of mobile phones by adolescents include:

- addiction to sending and receiving SMS – signifies compulsion to send and receive text messages. Young people can send up to several hundred messages a day. Their mood and well-being depend on the number of SMSs received on a given day. It happens that they send text messages to people nearby, for instance during lessons, lectures, when they are in a cinema, theatre, church; sometimes they even send them to themselves (e.g. from a computer).

- addiction to having and showing the latest phone models (appearance, price) and the number of calls made – this is the so-called mobile exhibitionism, which among young people can manifest itself through paying great attention to the look of the device (colour, style), as well as its price. Making an appearance,

among peers, with a new phone model and constantly answering and making calls are supposed to prove the popularity in the group, and at the same time to make others envious.

- addiction to the access to an inappropriate content and the use of cyberbullying – a mobile phone gives young people the access to websites offering games and films of inappropriate for them content (violence, pornography). Moreover, video recorders and photo cameras installed in smartphones cause the possibility to spread compromising information, videos, photos, and attack, so-called hating weaker individuals (cyberbullying) (Jarczyńska and Orzechowska 2014; Pawłowska and Potembska 2011).

One of the most serious consequences of young people's addiction to the mobile phone is the progressive withdrawal from the 'outside' world and the reduction of direct interpersonal contacts. Addicted adolescents start to spend more and more time alone, which favours even more intensive use of phone, giving young people the misleading impression of having an extensive network of contacts (Jarczyńska and Orzechowska 2014). Those are, however, often virtual and superficial acquaintances, devoid of 'emotional expression, which fail in the moment of need, causing disappointment and crisis of various types. Moreover, phonoholism among adolescents results in decline of other interests, sudden mood swings, conflicts with relatives and problems at school, etc. (Chóliz 2010). Its serious consequence can also be caused by long-time exposure to electromagnetic fields waves impact emitted by the phone screen, as well as the lack of physical activity, which is so much needed to keep the body in the right shape.

Phonoholism as an addiction to mobile phones, which affects an increasing group of children and adolescents, calls for a bottom-up study, which gives clear and specific indications on how to protect the young generation from it. The indication of selected effects of phonoholism constitutes an attempt to draw attention to the gravity of this social problem. The issue of addiction to mobile phones among the young generation should find its permanent place not only in the school addiction prevention framework, but also in the range of therapeutic help (psychological, psychotherapeutic support) to addicted people or those who are risky users of the tools of the digital world.

## 2. PHONOHOLISM – THE SCALE OF THE PHENOMENON AMONG TEENAGERS

The beginning of the 21st century is the 'era of new addictions'. More and more common is not only the addiction to psychoactive substances (alcohol, nicotine, drugs, or legal highs) but also other addictions called behavioural or activity addictions, among which there is also phonoholism (Belcer and Wojnarowska 2014, 41-43). The new addictions are still not recognized sufficiently. There are lacking diagnostic tools and theories explaining the mechanisms of their formation. We also know little about the prevention and treatment of this kind of behaviours.

The phenomenon of smartphone addiction is relatively recent, which is due to the fact that the mobile phone appeared on the world market about 20 years ago. The first country to spot the problem was China, where they started to write about it. This is also where in the medical literature appeared the new term: mobile phone dependence syndrome (Jarczyńska and Orzechowska 2014).

A review of research on the phenomena of dysfunctional use, abuse and addiction to the Internet proves that the number of users of this medium increases over time. Research conducted in 2015 among adolescents by Joanna Majchrzyk-Mikuła and Małgorzata Matusiak towards the occurrence of phonoholism clearly indicates that the frequency of using a mobile phone causes serious concern. More than eight in ten respondents declare that they use the phone very often or often, and for four in ten (40%) of them, the first thought after waking up concerns is where their telephone is. The same number of people believe that without a telephone 'human does not exist' (41%) (Majchrzyk-Mikuła and Matusiak 2015, 245-246).

The same research shows that in terms of the most characteristic behaviour leading to phonoholism, which is 'not to be parted with a mobile phone', stated that the vast majority (76%) of respondents declare never to leave the phone – in any situation. At the same time, almost the same number of them never leave their home without it, or they come back then they realize that they do not have it with them. When it comes to the emotional response in situations when there is no cell phone or it is difficult to use it, the respondents display definitely negative emotions (61%). Less than 1/5 of them (15%) carry a charger or a spare battery, which shows a certain inconsistency, since the negative emotions alone do not cause taking actions to eliminate this unpleasant state. The problem with turning off the phone in situations that require it (church, university classes, cinema, theatre, train, meeting with friends) is particularly visible among the respondents. While today it does not seem inappropriate to use phone on the bus or on the street (although until recently it was treated as undesirable behaviour, especially in case of loud conversations), using it in the cinema, theatre, and even in church cannot be considered appropriate. We are dealing with a situation where the functions of a given institution or place are not fully used in relation to their primary purpose (Majchrzyk-Mikuła and Matusiak 2015, 247-230).

Research conducted by the Dbam o Mój Zasięg Foundation and the University of Gdańsk in 2015-2016 among 20,000 students between 12 and 18 years of age indicates many important aspects of using smartphones. It is worth noticing the most important ones. First of all, the systematic use of one's own mobile phone starts at the average age of 10 (in large cities, the initiation age drops to 7-8 years). Secondly, over one-third of the surveyed adolescents cannot imagine their daily functioning without a mobile phone or smartphone. Thirdly, the surveyed students are frequent users of social networking sites. An account on at least one of them has 87% of respondents, while more than half of the adolescents surveyed declare having an account on two portals. Almost every fifth research participant

uses Facebook several dozen times a day. However, it is disturbing that some of the surveyed adolescents use social networks in a reckless way, inviting people whom they do not know at all (35%). It is worth noting that to the question "Are you a person addicted to a mobile phone?" every fifth student's (20.8%) answer is affirmative (Dębski 2017, 22-27).

A study carried out a few years later, at the turn of 2019 and 2020 by Mobiem Polska using the CAWI technique, on a nationwide sample of young people aged 15-35, yielded extremely disturbing data. According to the data obtained, young Poles are 'welded' to smartphones. Most do not part with them even at night. More than 60% of people aged 15 to 35 do not part with their smartphones during the day. These devices accompany young people everywhere – during social meetings, in the toilet and in the bedroom (82% of the respondents). Is it possible to do without a smartphone all day?. It turns out that nearly 70% of people are ready to return home for a smartphone, even if this is to result in being late for an agreed date of an appointment (*Młodzi Polacy* 2020).

The most disturbing data, however, concerns the use of mobile devices by children. They show that two-thirds of parents of children between the ages of 2 and 5 (64%) declare that they use mobile devices. On average, they spend half an hour with them, a little more, because only a few minutes longer, they spend reading books. For comparison, they take less than two hours a day to play with their parents, and an hour and a half to play with other children. Only 35.5% of parents did not give their children smartphones and tablets. The average time young children spend in front of screens is 49 minutes, which is more than a lesson unit. Meanwhile, doctors emphasize that children under the age of 3 should not do it at all (Pochrzęst-Motyczyńska 2019). Against this background, there appears a great need to take specific preventive actions.

Developing among young people a rational approach to the use of mobile digital devices, especially mobile phones, is one of the urgent tasks faced by the modern system of social prevention (Rowicka 2015). Activities aimed at counteracting phonoholism should generally focus on three basic educational environments which play a special role in the lives of young people. The first of these environments is the family, the proper functioning of which has a major impact on the course of the upbringing and socialization of a young person. Its 'preventive' potential in the field of phonoholism prevention can be expressed especially by building strong and deep family ties and relationships, parental involvement in children's matters and problems, spending time together and sharing common passions and interests (Dębski 2017; Miner 2020). These are just some of the 'advantages' of a family that can make a child happy and open to direct interpersonal contacts, without the need to close themselves in the virtual world. The school is the second environment which through its didactic and educational influence, can adequately stimulate the functioning of the young generation. By providing knowledge and developing appropriate "habits", it becomes an important link in the process of making young people aware of the serious

risks associated with addiction to a mobile phone (Dębski 2017, 39-42; Belcer and Wojnarowska 2014, 46). The third environment with a significant preventive value, protecting young people from phonoholism, is the peer group, which is a natural field of young people own activity (interests, passions). The awareness that one is accepted and understood in a group, discovering values together and searching for the meaning of life, teaches young people to be responsible for their own lives, and at the same time protects them against the compelling action of the digital world (Strivastava 2005; Rowicka 2015). The interpenetrating interaction of these natural environments of adolescents' life activity (family, school, peer group) builds the belief in the young generation that contacts in the virtual world are never able to replace direct contacts between people. The promotion of a healthy lifestyle, free from any enslavement, is in the interest of the whole society, and even in the global interest, because only a free man, creative in their thinking and acting can meet the challenges of the future.

### 3. SMARTPHONE ADDICTION AMONG YOUTH – SELF-REPORTED STUDY

The aim of the self-reported research was to get the opinions of young people on the use of a mobile phone – the frequency of this activity, the circumstances in which they reach for the telephone, the effects of excessive use of this tool. The research – due to the epidemiological situation in the country – was conducted via the Internet in March and April 2021. 450 students of secondary schools participated in them. Due to the incompleteness of the answers, 415 questionnaires were analysed. The criterion for the selection of the respondents was the availability of the group. 241 respondents (which constitutes 58% of the total number of respondents) are women, 174 people (which constitute 42%) – men.

The largest group (33.5%) was constituted by adolescents at the age of 16, slightly smaller (28.5%) at the age of 17, and 18% – at the age of 18. The smaller group (10%) turned out to be the respondents aged 15 and 9% aged 19. 20-year-olds constituted 1% of the respondents. The age of the respondents turned out to be varied, which undoubtedly gives a more complete view of the issue from the perspective of representatives of students of all grades of secondary schools. It is worth adding that most of the respondents (82%) come from complete families. 13% of the respondents are young people growing up in incomplete families; 4% in reconstructed families. The smallest group (0.2% of respondents) are adolescents whose parents are currently separated, and (0.2%) are in a foster family.

The respondents were asked to assess the financial situation of their family. Half of the respondents (50%) assessed it as good; 27% as very good; 22% – as an average. The smallest group (2%) were young people who described the family situation as bad. None of the respondents described it as very bad.

It is worth noting that the largest group of the surveyed youth (51.5%) declares that they spend on the phone 4 hours or more every day; 27% – 3 hours; 15.5%

– 2 hours. Only 6.5% of respondents stated that they only use a mobile phone for 1 hour during the day. It is worth emphasizing that 99.3% of respondents (412 people) indicated that they have permanent Internet access on their mobile phones. Only 3 respondents (0.7%) replied that they had no access.

The vast majority of secondary school students (85%) most often use the telephone in their family home. 12% indicated they do it in public places. It is optimistic that only 2.5% of the respondents indicated that they use the telephone at school. Only 0.5% of the respondents admitted that they do it wherever they are.

The mobile phone most often displaces the watch (which was confirmed by 91% of respondents), a calculator (81.5% of all indications), and a calendar (69%). Less often (18%), young people replace the radio with a telephone. Occasionally (0.5% of responses), an MP3 player, notebook/planner and a TV set. Only 1 person (which constitutes 0.2% of respondents) pointed to the flashlight.

The two main problems that were raised were formulated as questions – how important is the mobile phone in the life of modern youth? and – what negative effects of using a mobile phone do young people experience and what are the preventive measures they take? Research analyses allow presenting many important conclusions that should be classified into two basic areas.

### 3.1. The mobile phone and its place in the lives of adolescents

In the modern world, the mobile phone is very important, it constitutes the so-called “must have” among teenagers. It has many functions and is a kind of “link with the world”. Therefore, young people were asked where most of their contacts with other people take place – in the real environment or in the virtual world? The answers are presented in Chart1.

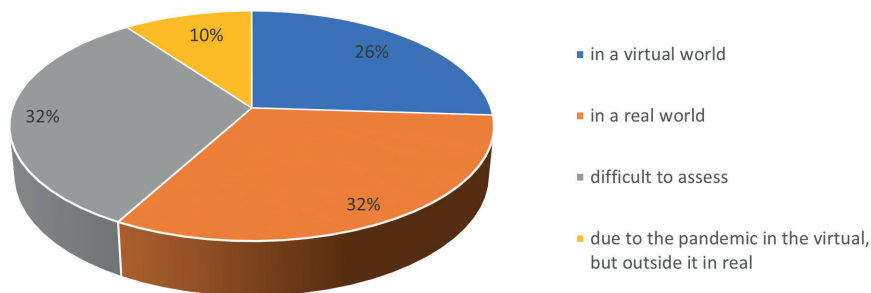


Chart 1. The environment of the majority of adolescents' contacts. Source: self-reported study.

The presented data clearly show that the position of the respondents is quite diverse. 32% of respondents (134 people) believe that most of their contacts with others take place in the real world. Exactly the same number – 32% say that only due to the ongoing pandemic, these contacts moved to the virtual world, but before that

time they definitely took place in the real world. 26% of respondents (110 people) indicate that it is a virtual space. It is worth noting that as many as 32% believe that they cannot assess it unambiguously. Therefore, it should be assumed that the reality related to the pandemic and the need for distance learning to a large extent transferred a significant part of the life of young people to the so-called virtual world.

Therefore, the young people were asked directly if they could function without a mobile phone. Their answers are presented in Chart 2.

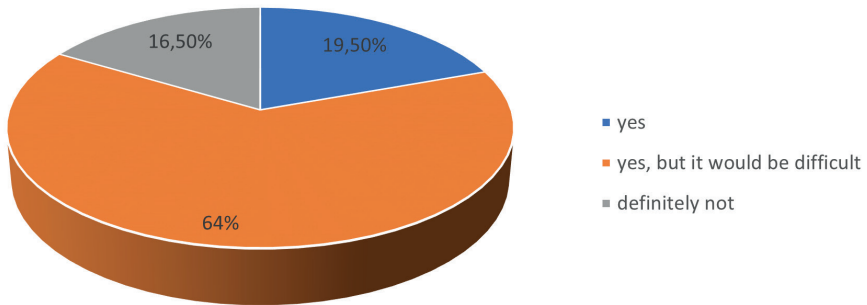


Chart 2. Ability to function without a mobile phone. Source: self-reported study.

The vast majority of respondents (64%) indicated that they could live without a mobile phone, but it would be very difficult for them. 19.5% felt they would be able to do so. It is worth emphasizing, however, that 16.5% of respondents clearly state that they definitely cannot imagine life without a mobile phone.

Then the respondents were asked what activities they most often use a mobile phone for.

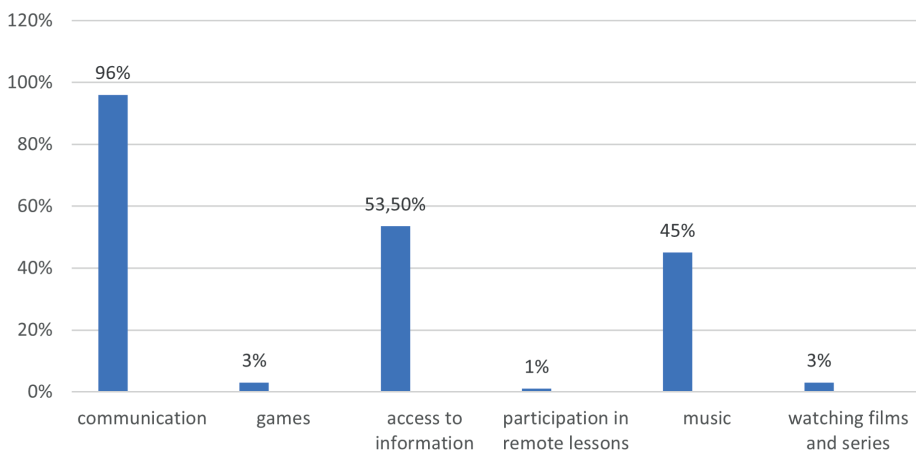


Chart 3. Activities young people use their mobile phone most often for. Source: self-reported study.



Students indicated that they most often use a mobile phone for communication (96%). More than half of the surveyed youth (53.5%) assessed that this activity is the access to information. Slightly less – 45% of respondents – indicated that they use the phone to listen to music. Only 3% of respondents use it to play and watch films/series. It should also be noted that 1% participate in on-line lessons using a connection via mobile phone. Due to the possibility of indicating more than one answer, the percentages do not sum up to 100.

Thus, young people were asked how the mobile phone contributes to the acquisition of knowledge.

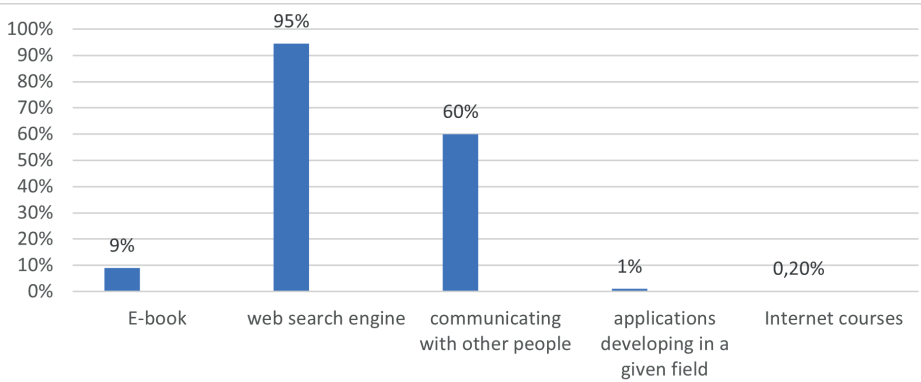


Chart 4. The way in which a mobile phone contributes to the acquisition of knowledge. Source: self-reported study.

The data presented in Chart 4 show that young people most often use the telephone to obtain new information through the Internet search engine (95%). A smaller group are the respondents who use the telephone as a tool that enables them to search for information by communicating with others (60% of respondents). Only 9% read e-books thanks to their phones; 1% use applications developing in a specific field; 0.2% of all respondents use the telephone to participate in online courses. Due to the possibility of indicating more than one answer, the percentages do not sum up to 100.

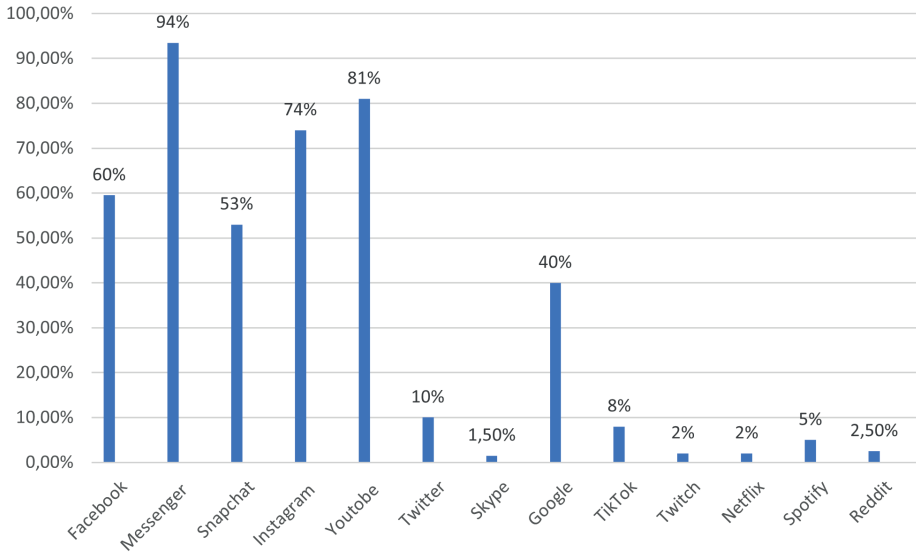


Chart 5. Applications that are most often used by young people. Source: self-reported study.

The data clearly indicate that the applications most often used by adolescents are: Messenger (94%); YouTube (81%); Instagram (74% of respondents); Facebook (60% of respondents) and Snapchat (53%). Less than half of the respondents (40%) use Google. 10% indicated Twitter, slightly less 8% – TikTok. 5% indicated Spotify, 2.5% – Reddit. Only 2% indicated Twitch and Netflix.

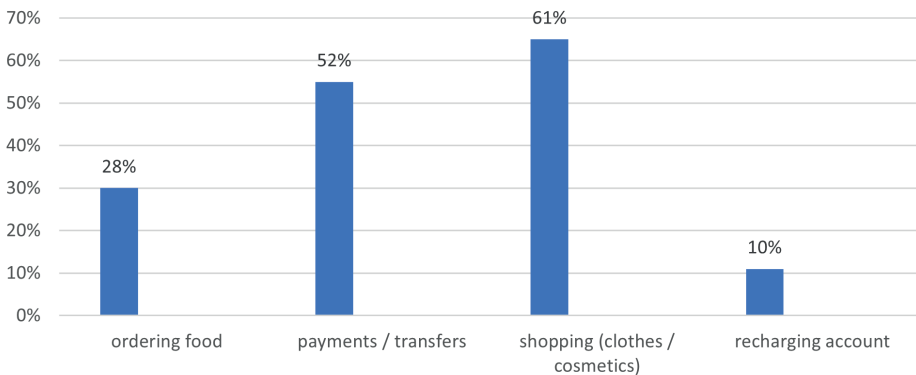


Chart 6. Online activities that young people most often perform using a mobile phone. Source: self-reported study.

The vast majority of young people (61%) do shopping over the phone (clothes, shoes, cosmetics), and make payments / transfers (52% of respondents). Less often (28%) order meals and top up their accounts (10%).

3.2. Negative effects of using a mobile phone by adolescents and the applied preventive measures

The research conducted in this area clearly shows that “frequent use of a mobile phone may have an adverse effect on human health,” (Guzowska 2015, 48) and young people are often unaware of the various consequences of telephone abuse, including “Deepening loneliness in real life, impoverishment of interpersonal relationships, vocabulary, closing oneself in the virtual world, causing family conflicts, inability to solve difficult situations and avoid such situations, and to deal with unpleasant emotions” (Guzowska 2015, 50).

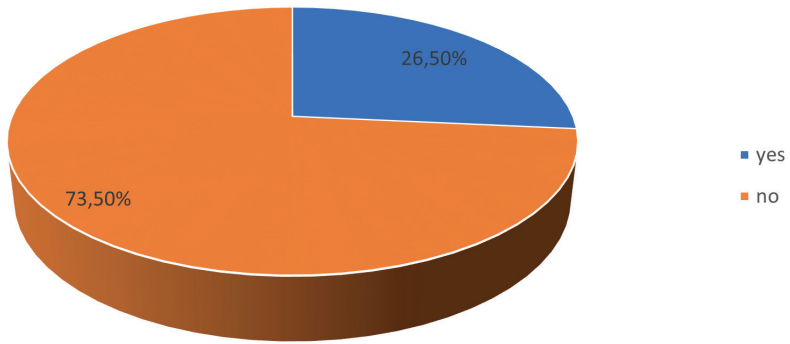


Chart 7. Experience of negative effects of using a mobile phone. Source: self-reported study.

26.5% of respondents (110 people) indicate that they have experienced negative effects of excessive use of a mobile phone. 73.5% (305 respondents) present a contrary opinion. Accordingly, the adolescents were asked what effects they experienced.

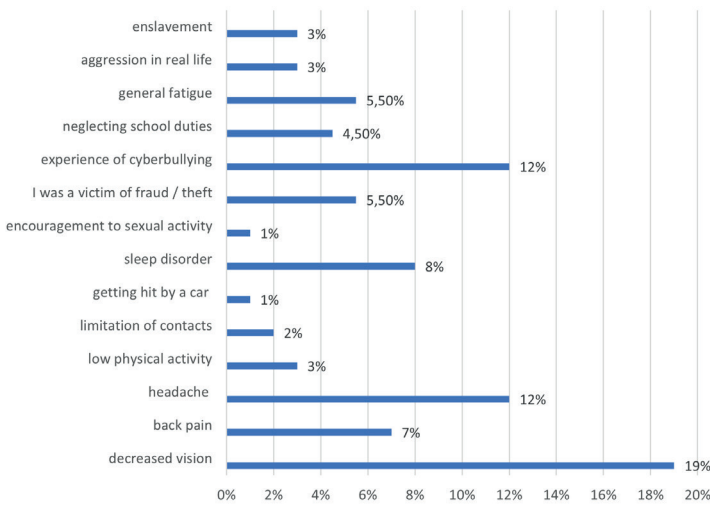


Chart 8. Effects of excessive mobile phone use. Source: self-reported study.

The data presented in Chart 8 clearly indicate that the most frequently experienced effect of excessive use of mobile phone by adolescents is deterioration of sight (19%); headache (12%) and the experience of cyberbullying (12%). Slightly less common are: sleep disturbances (8%), back pain (7%), general fatigue (5.5%) and experience of internet fraud / theft (5.5%). The youth also indicated the neglect of school duties (4.5%), reduced physical activity (3%), and the use of aggression in real life (3%). It is worth noting that 3% of respondents believe that they are enslaved by the phone. One of the respondents referring to the feeling of helplessness formulates even the question – “it is a kind of enslavement. I don’t want to use it anymore but what then?”. 2% of respondents indicate a limitation of real contacts as a result of telephone abuse, 1% admit that they were hit by a car as a result of inattentive use of the telephone, and the same number (1%) indicated that they were encouraged to have sexual activities on the telephone.

Young people were asked whether they had ever devoted too much attention and time to using a cell phone, and as a result their relationships with parents, siblings and other important people have deteriorated. 68% of respondents (282 people) state that they have not experienced any deterioration in their relationships with their parents, siblings and other important people. However, the data showing that every third respondent (133 respondents, which constitutes 32%) states that they have experienced this effect is disturbing. For this reason, young people were asked how many times in the last 6 months such a situation had occurred.

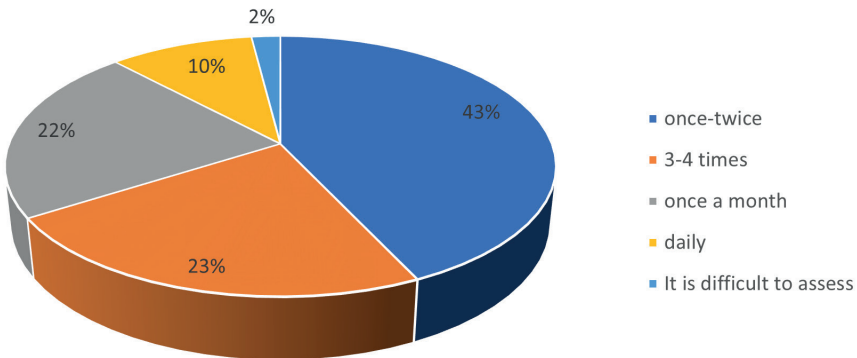


Chart 9. The frequency of disturbances in relationships with loved ones. Source: self-reported study.

Almost half of people who admitted that they experienced a deterioration in relations with their loved ones due to spending too much time on using a mobile phone (43%) assessed that such a situation took place once or twice in the last 6 months. 23% stated the occurrence of such circumstances 3-4 times in six months, and slightly less – because 22% once a month. Worryingly, 10% of respondents said they experience it every day. 2% of respondents were unable to assess it.

The adolescents were asked to indicate whether they perceived symptoms of excessive mobile phone use by their friends. Interesting data is shown in the chart below.

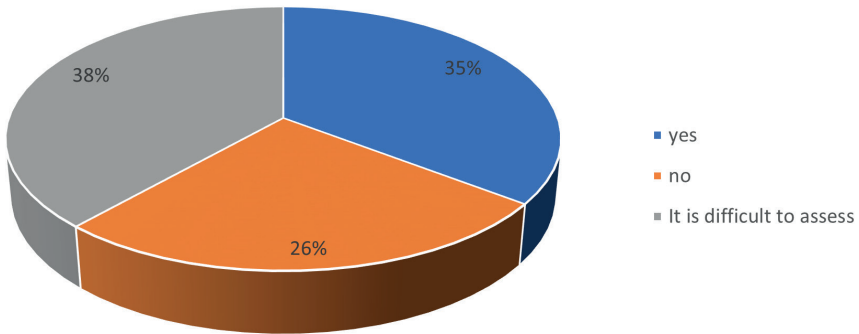


Chart 10. Noticing symptoms of addiction among acquaintances. Source: self-reported study.

38% of respondents admitted that it is difficult for them to assess whether the way their friends use a mobile phone shows the symptoms of addiction. That may be due to the insufficient knowledge on the subject. 35% assessed that they notice it, 26% denied it. When asked – how often – they answered: mostly sporadically (40%); often (26%); and very often (13%). Also, 13% of respondents indicated that they notice such situations rarely, 7.5% – very rarely.

In order to understand the issue more fully, young people were asked what actions do they take to prevent the smartphone addiction.

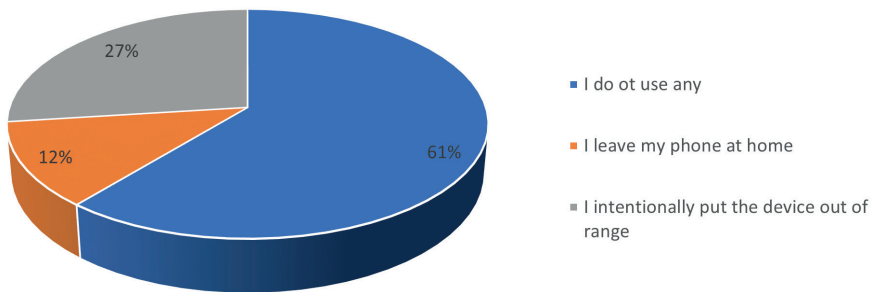


Chart 11. Preventive activities applied by young people. Source: self-reported study.

The data presented in Chart 11 clearly shows that the majority of respondents (61%) do not take any actions to prevent the addiction to a mobile phone. 27% of young people intentionally put their devices out of reach, and 12% leave their phone at home.

## DISCUSSION

It is difficult for young people to assess (32%) whether most of their contacts take place in the virtual or real world. This is probably due to the fact that the current epidemiological situation related to remote learning makes it necessary to transfer most of the relations to the Internet. The same group (32%) clearly finds these contacts to take place in the virtual world. It is also puzzling that 64% of the respondents clearly declare that if necessary, they would be able to function without a mobile phone, but it would be very difficult for them. 16.5% of young people are convinced that they cannot imagine a day without a phone.

Research on the risk of phonoholism has shown that the adolescents make use of wide range of phone applications mainly in order to communicate with other person. This is the one of the main (96%) activities indicated by young people for which a mobile phone is needed. The most commonly used by youth applications are: Messenger (94%); YouTube (81%); Instagram (74%); Facebook (60%), and Snapchat (53%). Additionally, it is worth noting that the aforementioned applications work through the Internet connection, and thus an increased amount of time spent on using a mobile phone.

On the basis of the studies carried out, it appears that 26% of respondents admits that they experience negative effects of using a mobile phone. Moreover, young people also notice these symptoms among their friends. It is also worth noting that they see these behaviours in others much more often than in themselves (35%). It is worrying that the vast majority of young people do not take any preventive measures (61%). Young people with interest enter the virtual world, wanting to get to know it, because it is created in such a way that it is attractive to recipients. This makes the adolescents succumb to its charm, not realizing its consequences. Moreover, the largest group of young people (51.5%) spends 4 hours or more on the phone every day. It should, therefore, be assumed that most of the free time after school is spent by young people using a mobile phone. This leads to both physical ailments, for instance, decreased vision, headache, general fatigue, sleep disturbances, as well as disturbances in mental functioning, such as the experience of cyberbullying, theft, encouragement to sexual activity, or aggression transferred to real-world relationships. It is worth emphasizing that among the respondents (3%) there are young people who clearly declare that they feel enslaved by a mobile phone which, for example, has put their lives at risk (being hit by a car).

All the data show clearly how urgent is the need to reflect on this phenomenon as well as to find very specific preventive measures. Prevention in this respect appears to be an urgent necessity of significant social importance. Since it is disturbing that the youngest patients of addiction treatment centres are only a few years old.

The conducted study constitutes an introduction to further observations and analyses, which shall have a broader and more in-depth character as far as the

surveyed group is concerned. Undoubtedly, in the near future, the observation of the described phenomenon will provide interesting data, due to the severity of the problem and the constantly growing number of people in whom the observed syndrome begins to hinder or prevent the correct fulfilling of their social roles.

## CONCLUSION

It is difficult for modern youth to imagine life without the use of a mobile phone, which often puts them at a risk of addiction. The aim of the presented research was an attempt to respond to the problem bothering many teachers, concerning the risk of phonoholism among secondary school students. The research has shown that adolescents do not detect the negative effects of using a mobile phone (addiction), but at the same time they declare that functioning without a telephone would be very difficult or even impossible for them. This is a serious signal that such a threat does occur to some extent and may increase over time, and eventually turn into an addiction. Moreover, further dynamic development of information technology and the emergence of newer and newer phone models on the market, directly requires caregivers to take decisive actions aimed at shaping the skills of rational and responsible use of mobile digital devices in the young generation. Therefore, it is worth indicating a few postulates that should be taken into account by parents, teachers and educators in the process of shaping the attitudes and behaviour of modern adolescents. The authors of the following article are convinced that the upbringing and education system of young generation should include:

- early identification and development of interests in children and adolescents, especially those related to physical activity (e.g. sport, tourism, recreation), social activity (e.g. voluntary work), artistic activity (e.g. dance, painting, theatre), giving young people an opportunity for personal expression and a valuable experience of reality together with and for the benefit of other people;
- in the process of school education, providing students with knowledge and shaping their competences in the field of proper and safe use of new digital media technologies in everyday life, while highlighting the ability to maintain balance and harmony between the real and virtual world;
- as part of various meetings and social campaigns aimed at adolescents; making young people aware of the nature and mechanisms of becoming dependent on mobile digital devices, as well as showing where they can seek effective help and support in crisis situations;
- closer cooperation between parents and teachers in the area of counteracting the risk of phonoholism, combined with carrying out an appropriate training for parents in dealing with their children's addiction to mobile phones and other mobile digital devices.

The above-mentioned postulates are only a general proposal that may become the basis for the development, by teachers and educators, of specific preventive and educational programs, adapted to particular environmental conditions of life of young people and their caregivers. The lack of clearly observed symptoms of phonoholism in adolescents does not release their guardians from preventive measures aimed at developing their personal potential, whilst sensitizing them to possible dangers and addictions related to the use of mobile digital devices.

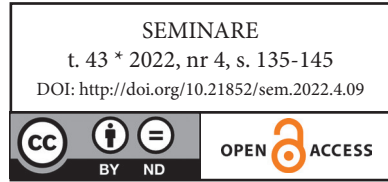
#### REFERENCES:

- Andrzejewska, Anna. 2007. "Uzależnienie od mediów cyfrowych." In *Encyklopedia pedagogiczna XXI wieku*, t. 4, edited by Tadeusz Pilch, 1189. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie „Żak”.
- Belcer, Agnieszka and Anna Wojnarowska. 2014. "Fonoholizm – nowe uzależnienie młodzieży." In *Patologie i uzależnienia (wybrane problemy teorii i praktyki)*, edited by Beata Skwarek, Elżbieta Wulbach and Irena Lewicka, 39-48. Warszawa-Łódź: Studio Poligraficzne Edytorka.
- Billieux, Joël et al. 2015. "Can Disordered Mobile Phone Use Be Considered a Behavioral Addiction? An Update on Current Evidence and a Comprehensive Model for Future Research." *Current Addiction Reports* 2: 156-162.
- Billieux, Joël. 2012. "Problematic use of the mobile phone: a literature review and a pathways model." *Current Psychiatry Reviews* 8(4): 299-307.
- Bragazzi, Nicola L. and Giovanni Del Puente. 2014. "A proposal for including nomophobia in the new DSM-V." *Psychology Research and Behavior Management* 7: 155-160.
- Chóliz, Mariano. 2010. *Mobile Phone Addiction in Adolescence: Evaluation and Prevention of Mobile Addiction in Teenagers*. Saarbrücken: LAMBERT Academic Publishing.
- Dębski, Maciej. 2017. *Nałogowe korzystanie z telefonów komórkowych. Szczegółowa charakterystyka zjawiska fonoholizmu w Polsce. Raport z badań*. Gdynia: Fundacja Dbam o Mój Z@sięg.
- Foerster, Milena et al. 2015. "Problematic mobile phone use in adolescents: derivation of a short scale MPPUS-10." *International Journal of Public Health* 60: 277-286.
- Gardner, Howard and Katie Davis. 2013. *The App Generation. How today's youth navigate identity, intimacy, and imagination in a digital world*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Griffiths, Mark D. 1996. "Behavioural addictions: As issue for everybody?" *Journal of Workplace Learning* 8(3): 19-25.
- Guerreschi, Cesare. 2006. *Nowe uzależnienia*. Translated by Anna Wiczorek-Niebielska. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Salwator.



- Guzowska, Ewa. 2015. "Zagrożenia wynikające z telefonów komórkowych." *Problemy Opiekuńczo-Wychowawcze* 7: 48.
- Jarczyńska, Jolanta and Aleksandra Orzechowska. 2014. "Siecioholizm i fonoholizm zagrożeniem współczesnej młodzieży." In *Uzależnienia behawioralne i zachowania problemowe młodzieży*, edited by Jolanta Jarczyńska, 121-146. Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego.
- Jenaro, Cristina et al. 2009. "Problematic Internet and cell-phone use: Psychological behavioral, and health correlates." *Addiction Research and Theory* 15(3): 309-320.
- Kozak, Stanisław. 2013. *Patologia fonoholizmu: przyczyny, skutki i leczenie uzależnienia dzieci i młodzieży od telefonu komórkowego*. Warszawa: Difin.
- Majchrzyk-Mikuła, Joanna and Małgorzata Matusiak. 2015. "Analiza teoretyczna i empiryczna zjawiska fonoholizmu wśród studentów kierunku pedagogika." *Journal of Modern Science* 4(27): 417-436.
- Miner, Julianna. 2020. *Smartfonowe dzieciaki. Dla rodziców, których dzieci wychowują się w świecie smartfonów*. Translated by Paweł Grysztar. Oświęcim: Wydawnictwo Bez Fikcji.
- Młodzi Polacy nie rozstają się z telefonami. Mają je w rękach nawet kilka godzin dziennie*. 2020. Access: 21.09.2021. <https://mondaynews.pl/badanie-mlodzi-polacy-nie-rozstaja-sie-z-telefonami-maja-je-w-rekach-nawet-kilka-godzin-dziennie/>.
- Pawłowska, Beata and Emilia Potembska. 2011. "Płeć a nasilenie objawów uzależnienia od telefonu komórkowego u uczniów polskich szkół gimnazjalnych, średnich i wyższych." *Current Problems of Psychiatry* 4(12): 433-438.
- Pochrząst-Motyczyńska, Agnieszka. 2019. *W Polsce jest 2,5 miliona pracoholików i ponad milion zakupoholików*. Access: 12.07.2021. <https://www.prawo.pl/zdrowie/od-czego-uzaleznieni-sa-polacy-wyniki-raportu-cbos-z-2019-r,495779.html>.
- Rowicka, Magdalena. 2015. *Uzależnienia behawioralne. Profilaktyka i terapia*. Warszawa: Fundacja Praesterno.
- Smetaniuk, Peter. 2014. "A preliminary investigation into the prevalence and prediction of problematic cell phone use." *Journal of Behavioral Addictions* 3(1): 41-53.
- Strivastava, Lara. 2005. "Mobile phones and the evolution of social behaviour." *Behaviour and Information Technology* 24(2): 111-129.
- Takao, Motoharu. 2014. "Problematic mobile phone use and Big-Five personality domains." *Indian Journal of Community Medicine* 39(2): 111-113.





MARCIN KLIMSKI

Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9118-1673> \* [m.klimski@uksw.edu.pl](mailto:m.klimski@uksw.edu.pl)

Received: 23 Oct 2022; Reviewed: 20 Nov 2022; Accepted: 21 Dec 2022

## COMMON-SENSE COGNITION IN THE PRACTICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

From the point of view of environmental protection issues, the subject of common-sense cognition appears to be an important source of knowledge. Such cognition facilitates a proper and distortion-free assessment of the current condition of the societal and natural environment, and consequently orientates man to take preventive and protective measures in the areas that require such undertakings.

This paper presents a holistic approach to the issues related to the urgent need to cover the societal and natural space with protective measures, which are reflected in the practice of the educational mission of the Catholic Church together with her associations and charitable organisations. The aforementioned mission is related to the humanistic reflection on the environmental crisis and constitutes a practical and educational platform. Both activities of Christian communities use data taken from common-sense cognition, which is a valuable tool in obtaining and determining reliable information.

**Keywords:** environmental education, cognition, common sense, educational practice

### ZDROWOROZSĄDKOWE POZNANIE W PRAKTYCE EDUKACJI EKOLOGICZNEJ KOŚCIOŁA KATOLICKIEGO

### Abstrakt

Z punktu widzenia problematyki ochrony środowiska kwestia poznania zdroworozsądkowego stanowi ważne źródło wiedzy. Takie poznanie pozwala na właściwą, pozbawioną zafałszowania ocenę bieżącego stanu środowiska społeczno-przyrodniczego, a w konsekwencji orientuje człowieka na podjęcie działań prewencyjnych i ochronnych w tych sferach, które wymagają takich przedsięwzięć.

Artykuł prezentuje holistycznie ujęte zagadnienia związane z pilną potrzebą objęcia działaniami ochronnymi przestrzeni społeczno-przyrodniczej, które mają swoje odzwierciedlenie w praktyce

---

<sup>1</sup> This article was printed on the same title in Polish.

misji edukacyjnej Kościoła katolickiego wraz z ich stowarzyszeniami i organizacjami charytatywnymi. Wspomniana misja wiąże się z humanistyczną refleksją nad kryzysem środowiskowym oraz stanowi płaszczyznę praktyczno-edukacyjną. Obie aktywności środowisk chrześcijańskich sięgają do danych zaczerpniętych z poznania zdroworozsądkowego, będącego cennym narzędziem w pozyskiwaniu i ustalaniu rzetelnych informacji.

**Słowa kluczowe:** edukacja ekologiczna, poznanie, zdrowy rozsądek, praktyka edukacyjna

## INTRODUCTION

The societal and natural environment is a space for multidimensional human activity. Any manifestation of human activity in this environment is a consequence of a previously chosen course of action. This is the case both in the education of the youngest age groups and adults. Humanistic reflection on the place of a human being in nature and their interaction with the nature allows us to derive the conclusion that common-sense cognition orientates man to take up appropriate decision-making acts and, consequently, choices and actions. The required condition is to have a properly categorised catalogue of values. What it will be depends, among other things, on the educational processes. As a social being, man necessarily manages in a certain societal and natural environment, and this forces the adoption and consideration of the rules prevailing in it (Kaniewska and Klimski 2017, 286-291).

Nowadays, what matters to an average person are mainly the profits they can get for themselves from various sources, including the societal and natural environment. In this regard, it is necessary for various institutions to implement education for the societal and natural environment in the broadest sense, commonly referred to as ecological education. These include such institutions that undertake formal education, i.e. schools and universities, but also informal ones that support the universal education system. In this case, a large role is played by the family, which is the cradle of the first and necessary information that parents pass on to their children. From an early age, a child should learn about the natural environment, the processes that occur in it, and learn to respect its components appropriately. Simple as it seems, this prescription for undertaking environmental education in order to care for the societal and natural world is not always able to break through in today's civilisation of indifference.

From the perspective of environmental issues, common-sense cognition is an important source of knowledge. Based on proper representation, such cognition makes it possible to correctly assess the current state of the societal and natural environment and, consequently, orientate people to take preventive and protective measures in those spheres that require such undertakings. Thus, the issue of common-sense cognition should find its application in environmental education since such cognition helps people form their consciousness; consequently, a person's attitude towards environmental problems will no longer be passive. In

addition, understanding environmental risks based on this cognition helps reject any premise bearing the name of *fake news*.

Holistically framed issues related to the urgent need to cover the societal and natural space with protective measures are also reflected in the educational mission of the Catholic Church, including her organisations described herein. The aforementioned mission involves humanistic reflection on the environmental crisis and provides a practical and educational platform. Both activities of Christian circles reach for data drawn from common-sense cognition, which is a valuable tool in obtaining and establishing reliable information.

#### 1. THE VOICE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ON THE NEED TO PROTECT THE SOCIETAL AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The importance of the societal and environmental issues to the Church's educational mission was recognised by Pope Paul VI. In his speeches, he emphasised that every person has a moral responsibility to use the environment in such a way as to leave it for future generations. It seems that the impetus for the Holy Father's exploration of further moral and societal issues was the report by United Nations Secretary-General Sithu U Tant of 26 May 1969 entitled, *The problems of the Human Environment* (U Thant 1969), which gained worldwide publicity at the time. The Church's voice on environmental issues was also present at the United Nations Conference. The event took place in Stockholm between 5 and 17 June 1972. The Vatican submitted two documents at the time; the first titled, *A Hospitable Earth for Future Generations*, addressed to Maurice Strong, the Secretary-General of the conference, and the second, being an expression of the Pope's views taken and prepared by a group of experts, the title of which was, *Message of His Holiness Paul VI to Mr. Maurice F. Strong, Secretary-General of the Conference on the Environment* (Paul VI 1972). Analysing the document, several important conclusions that illuminate the educational dimension of the Church's consideration of environment can be discerned.

The first conclusion of the cited report is that man and the environment are one. Consequently, the environment must serve to further holistic human development; thus, it cannot be indifferent either to human conscience or to the culture. The second conclusion leads to the assertion that all goods derived from the environment are shared by all people, which imposes an obligation to dispose of them fairly, also in the global aspect. These moral demands were also taken up in the document addressed to Maurice Strong.

The cited principles proclaimed by the Holy See point to the anthropocentric orientation of environmental issues since all moral imperatives and the educational demands derived from them are directed to man. In his *Message of the Holy Father Paul VI for the Fifth World-Wide Day of Environment*, Pope Paul VI called for the rational – worthy of modern man – use of the environment. He also requested that

every effort should be made within the activities carried out in order to ensure that current and future generations would develop under ecological conditions of the environment (Ślipko and Zwoliński 1999, 22-27). Following the Pope's recommendations, common-sense cognition undeniably will allow a person to make appropriate choices, rational, and free of fallacies.

Pope John Paul II was concerned about environmental issues, too. This is evidenced by the environmental content of his encyclicals and speeches addressed to participants in numerous meetings. In his encyclical, *Centesimus annus*, Pope John Paul II reminds us that among the various duties of states, there is also the one of safeguarding the collective goods of the natural and human environment. From the perspective of the time that has passed since the publication of this encyclical, the Pope's message is still relevant and requires constant reminding (John Paul II 1991).

The encyclical, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, in turn, instructs on the pernicious phenomenon of progress, which cannot be understood as a process that proceeds, yielding unlimited consumer goods. Pope John Paul II points out that the unrestrained desire to acquire all material goods leads directly to losing oneself in a indefinitely permanent desire to possess: "unless one is shielded from the flood of publicity and the ceaseless and tempting offers of products – that the more one possesses the more one wants, while deeper aspirations remain unsatisfied and perhaps even stifled" (John Paul II 1987). An important message of the Holy Father projecting the issue of environmental protection, which began to take on global interest with great force, was the *Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace*, falling on 1 January 1990. The document was holistically aimed at sensitising people to environmental issues. The Pope appealed that "the entire human community – individuals, States and international bodies – take seriously the responsibility that is theirs" (John Paul II 2005, 15). In addition, the Pope pointed out that beside the threats to peace, such as local armed conflicts, the continuous improvement of armed forces, the unjust use of wealth or social indifference, there should also be mentioned disrespect for the components of nature, the irrational use of its resources, and the deteriorating quality of human life. Furthermore, any effects that are brought about by environmental degradation as a result of anthropogenic conduct, in the context of the Church's teachings, are considered wicked of human nature and incompatible with the Creator's plan. The existing state, therefore, must be considered in the context of an ethical and thus moral change in the attitude of human existence. The issues of the need to protect the societal and natural environment should also find their place in the educational perspective as it is through education that it becomes possible to sensitise people to the meaning and duty of putting all the efforts of a single individual into the mission of taking care of the place of temporal existence.

In addition, the Holy See gives several demands by means of which the impending societal and environmental crisis can be slowed down. Emphasis is placed on creating an international system that manages environmental resources,

allowing them to be used evenly. Attention is also paid to including the right to live in safe environmental conditions in the Declaration of Human Rights. The fight against poverty in the Third World countries, being the consequence of the depletion of vast tracts of land, also became a demand in the Message. The document discusses issues oscillating around military research, particularly any attempt to produce biological and bacteriological weapons. In order to cope with all these aspects that in any way affect the various components of the societal and natural environment, it becomes necessary to break with the consumerist lifestyle often underpinned by hedonistic considerations. The Holy Father called for “new all-human solidarity” to repair the effects of industrialisation and to make an effort to ensure that the ecological crisis does not proceed at such a rapid pace (Tyburski 1993, 9-11).

The pontificate of John Paul II, by virtue of its length, made it possible to address the environmental consequences of the improperly implemented actions of modern people. Pope John Paul II was close to societal and environmental issues, which he often included in his encyclicals. In addition, he recommended a moral transformation, which would materialise in actions that incline people to protect the natural world (Tyburski 1993, 28-39).

The reasons for the deteriorating state of the environment cited above, which are merely a signalling of the problem, have led, in a way, to various measures aimed at curbing these negative consequences. The need for societal activism of a theoretical and practical nature has become a key challenge for integral ecology, which Pope Francis cites in his encyclical, *Laudato si'*. He outlines possible courses of corrective actions, precisely for the sake of the common home. Due to the broad research matter of integral ecology, many issues can be analysed and discussed in the humanities (especially philosophy and, within it, ethics), social sciences, pedagogical sciences, and those strictly related to the protection of the societal and natural environment, such as sozology (Dołęga 2006, 58-59)<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. COMMON SENSE IN MAN'S COGNITION OF NATURAL REALITY

The coming into existence of a human on Earth forced them to take certain actions necessary for survival and existence. Human being, as a separate entity in the structure of the natural environment, was left to their own resources from the very first moments of their earthly journey. They had to face the constraints exerted by the environment, which involved the skilful management of the environment, the constitution of societal life, and, in later stages, the development of the scientific and religious spheres. One might be tempted to say that a human being was the least suited to the natural environment of all the entities that constitute it. This

---

<sup>2</sup> The term was popularised by Walery Goetel in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Sozology indicates a science whose object is the protection of nature, and consequently the care of man's natural οἶκος. In view of the rich scientific output in the field of holistic environmental protection, the term 'sozology' has been expanded in content and scope.

manifested itself in the sensitivity to external stimuli coming at them in the form of an unfriendly environment, and internal stimuli causing illnesses. All of the above made human beings gradually strengthen their position in reality by acting in accordance with their own natural and improvised cognition. They experienced their surroundings and analysed everything to the extent that was allowed by their simple cognition. All this also translated into a slow probing of one's self and a seamless blending of collected experience, which is still expressed today in the form of culture. Thus, cognition was and is fundamental to human life (Krapiec 1999, 342). That cognition, which was not yet methodologically legitimised, was guided by a rationally chosen goal that man pursued on the path of their adaptation to the environment. It can be said that that was common-sense cognition based on human wisdom. Common sense should, therefore, be understood as a cognitive attitude (Krapiec 1999, 342).

The areas of human cognitive life intertwine and complement one another, giving a picture of a common-sense understanding of reality. Fundamental moral duties are also widely understood and are not subject to social discussion. The same is true of man's ethical relation to the societal and natural environment, which should be considered a common good based on their common-sense cognition. Common-sense cognition constitutes a source and a basis for all people to act upon. Furthermore, it does not constitute calls for activity based on overly abstract theories, often inaccessible to common man, incomprehensible and undermining the validity of the common-sense cognitive order. This pre-scientific source of action is the foundation of a normal and, above all, rational existence for every human being, whether in an individual relationship with another human being, the environment, or in a societal relationship. It also happens that a common-sense source of cognitive information can provide a person with erroneous or inconsistent premises about the object being learned. Such situations occur when we are given distorted data from sensory cognition. However, this is not a significant consequence for a human as such events occur sporadically and are verified in retrospect with information from common-sense cognition (Krapiec 1999, 342-343). Of course, human cognition makes it possible to diagnose the surrounding natural reality. It is a process that is given only to man, and it is this process that, among other things, sets man apart from all the components of the environment. Man explores reality by means of the natural process of cognition and does not react negatively to it. All cognitive stimuli come in from the environment and are consequently analysed. They constitute a cognitive mediation, based on which man appropriately experiences reality given in cognition and, if necessary, instrumentalises it. Such transformation of the natural world is carried out because of human needs.

Among other things, humans learn about nature by being in relationship with it. Human corporeality imposes a kind of necessity on man. These are the needs that arise from the psychophysical nature of man, which include living surrounded by nature and processing it for continued existence. Also here a certain imbalance



in the human-nature relationship can be observed. For a long time, before first humans appeared, the natural world could have existed without them, which indicates the nature's independence from man. However, its riches, which are manifested in the various resources acquired by man, provide man with the means they need for their existence. Significant needs of existential nature that humans have are all the time satisfied by the reservoir of natural potentials. All of this points to the expediency of nature, i.e. the adequacy of its internal structure for humans. Thus, natural reality is in a supportive relationship with respect to man, and this is due to its peculiar reference that is an essential existential status (Ślipko and Zwoliński 1999, 133-134). It is indisputable that nature must be coordinated by man in the world. With this also comes the need to add nature to whatever laws are in place in this human reality.

The natural area represents a variety of different, and undoubtedly necessary, values for human beings to enable their existence. It allows its multifaceted formation of needs, which in each case should be reasonably formed. It can be assumed that natural reality is a means for activating the perfection inflicted on man, and thus participates in man's due moral dignity. In such a description, it can be understood that nature gains a new dimension, which manifests itself in the humanistic aspect of its relationship to man (Ślipko 1994, 38). The subservient character of nature, along with the moral nature of each person, shapes the moral relationship between the two. The result of this bond is a criterion that constitutes the subordination of natural reality to the human realm, but only to the extent that is necessary for the fulfilment of any moral predestination of the person. The anthropological plane indicates that the perception of man, as more perfect in the hierarchical order of the components of the environment, becomes possible because man's structure contains a substantial spiritual element of existence and development. Through this element, human being is a personal subject aware of their dignity. Thanks to that, they can also undertake designated life ventures (Ślipko 1994, 39).

Common-sense cognition provides humans with the ability to take appropriate actions to prevent the devastation of the societal and natural environment as effectively as possible. They are equipped with cognitive abilities that, after appropriate analysis, allow them to relate to the given reality in terms of, *inter alia*, moral aspects. Understanding the laws, by which nature is governed holistically, along with humans and their relationships often taking on the dimension of an ethic of protecting people (Andrzejuk 2014, 40), also helps to adopt appropriate attitudes that nowadays are called pro-environmental.

### 3. CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE SERVICE OF ECOLOGY – EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

The problems outlined in the first part of the paper that were considered by the Catholic Church's superiors are nowadays reflected in the educational practice.

A noteworthy educational endeavour arising from the Church's response to the increasingly externalised societal and environmental crisis is the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM), instituted in 2015 (Catholic climate movement 2021). The initiators of the Movement emphasise that the reason and the basis for their practical and educational mission on environmental issues were two events. The first was the Holy See's publication of Pope Francis' encyclical entitled, *Laudato si'*. Indeed, the document represents a kind of *novelty* in the context of the form of encyclicals published so far. A distinctive feature of the encyclical is the message contained in it, which reaches almost everyone who studies it. The second reason for the Global Catholic Climate Movement to take practical action was the Paris COP 21 Climate Agreement. Both of these events, as the initiators of the Movement point out, took place in 2015 and symbolised the Greek *καιρός*, occurring in the Gospel, translated as "the right moment" (Catholic climate movement 2021). It has become a priority task for the Movement to undertake educational and practical initiatives related to the existence of climate justice globally. In addition, subsequent activities were focused on the transformation issues Pope Francis calls for in the encyclical. This change is activities that raise awareness of the environmental problems currently facing humanity globally. To this end, members of the Movement have organised various training courses to help achieve even greater educational effectiveness oriented towards the issues of care for our common home. The year 2020, due to pandemic constraints, forced members of the Global Catholic Climate Movement to reorganise their previous forms of work and resulted in the organisation of numerous webinars in the online space. Currently, the Movement's activities are setting the stage for further climate justice activism (Catholic climate movement 2021).

The second initiative related to the implementation of the practical and educational messages contained in Pope Francis' encyclical is the project, "Integral ecology of the encyclical *Laudato si'* in the operation of Caritas communities and local communities" (Laudato si caritas 2021). The main idea contained in the project, executed between 2019 and 2021, was to popularise integral ecology, as emphasised by Pope Francis. As the project's authors point out, "it was created as a response to Pope Francis' call to care for our common home – the Earth, translating the Church's social teaching on integral ecology into concrete practical actions" (Laudato si caritas 2021). The project underwent two levels of implementation. The first was a societal and educational perspective focused on local Caritas communities from twelve dioceses of Poland. This part of the project involved the appointment of animators from each diocese to organise grant competitions related to the initiative of societal ecological projects. Projects were supposed to address issues in the areas of integral ecology, water conservation, air, food, climate, new economy, biodiversity, and local campaigns. The societal and educational perspective implemented in this part of the project also included conducting workshops for local leaders and volunteers addressing environmental

challenges. It is worth noting that the project covered the whole of Poland. The second level of the project was the practical organisation of cross-media campaigns in various media. That made it possible to introduce the problems of integral ecology through interviews, speeches, and discussions with a wide range of experts (Laudato si caritas 2021).

The examples of educational-practical activities cited above indicate that a proper correlation is possible between the demands and recommendations issued by the Church's superiors and their educational and practical implementation carried out by Catholic associations or charitable institutions, such as Caritas Poland. It seems to be a good educational practice that helps reinforce the conventional education taking place at school. Any activity in the educational sphere that translates into social practice is needed because of the degradation of the living space that is the societal and natural environment.

## CONCLUSION

The need to include common sense in learning about the societal and natural environment and using common sense to properly understand the problems connected with the societal and natural environment seems to be a current challenge for the implementation of environmental education for the public. Nowadays, the importance of the problems occurring in the society and environment is recognised in many circles. They are the subject of concern not only of state policymakers, politicians, economists, lawyers, scientists, but also representatives of the Catholic Church circles. This is evidenced by the various projects undertaken, many of which are aimed at an educational dimension. In this case, education is not just a matter of formally implementing the issues specified in the core curriculum of a particular subject. Given the need to draw attention to the issue of societal and environmental protection, the non-formal aspects of environmental education is worth emphasising. They are an effective form of reaching a larger audience with information containing a specific problem. The times in which modern people live are forcing an even greater need to implement such activities. Pluralistic understanding of problems occurring in the environment not infrequently prompts reflection on them based on data from the common-sense cognition. When considering the need to integrate environmental education with education implemented at all its stages and all its forms, the necessity to pay more attention to the issue of common-sense cognition becomes apparent. This is undoubtedly an anthropological argument signalling to take all possible care of the societal and natural environment, among other things, for the sake of human welfare (Gogacz 1993, 137-146). The key anthropological argument is the recognition that only human beings have properties, such as reason, freedom, and responsibility. Through them, we can determine a particular ontic and moral status. This distinguished position defines man's responsibility for nature, but most importantly for another human being. Any duties can be held only towards

other people, while non-human components of the environment are assigned values when they are in relation to humans. Understood in this way, the relationship becomes the subject of everyone's rights and duties. Conversely, the condition of the natural environment, and therefore its welfare and survival, depends on human values (Wróblewski 2010, 73).

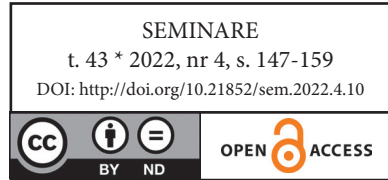
It is worth noting at this point that in the discussion of man's place in nature, some attempts to refute the above argumentation are evident. Its opponents rely on the justification that this is a philosophical and at the same time cultural context of the reasoning carried out, and, additionally, built on the thesis of man's domination over nature or the idea of man's dominion over the components of nature. Among the objections are also comments on the rationalist nature of culture, technocracy, and economism. With regard to this critical assessment, it should be noted that man's dominion over nature does not only mean their plundering and reckless exploitation of environmental resources and management of technical power. It also means the morality and rationality that is possessed only by man, and the basis on which man can function appropriately in the environment. On the side of this rationale, however, is the educational dimension of addressing problems in the societal and natural field as it is through this domain that there is a stimulation to protect the environment, and no one else but man. This is evidenced by the presented activities of Catholic organisations whose mission is to care for the common home recalled in the encyclical *Laudato si'*. This concern, translated into practical and educational actions, should come from a common-sense understanding of the specific problem.

#### REFERENCES:

- Andrzejuk, Artur. 2014. "Etyka chronienia osób. Zarys problematyki." *Rocznik Tomistyczny* 3: 23-41.
- Dołęga, Józef M. 2006. „Ekofilozofia i jej otulina.” *Episteme* 57(2006): 43-67.
- Gogacz, Mieczysław. 1993. "Antropologiczne i etyczne podstawy ochrony przyrody." *Studia Philosophiae Christianae* 29(2): 137-146.
- John Paul II. 2005. "Message of His Holiness Pope John Paul II for the Celebration of the 23rd World Day of Peace, Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all of Creation (1 January 1990)." *Zielony zeszyt REFA* 6: 13-22.
- Kaniewska, Małgorzata and Marcin Klimski. 2017. "Edukacja globalna wzmocnieniem procesu budowania solidarnego i sprawiedliwego świata." In *Theoria i praxis zrównoważonego rozwoju. 30 lat od ogłoszenia raportu Brundtland*, edited by Ryszard F. Sadowski and Zbigniew Łepko, 281-294. Warszawa: Towarzystwo Naukowe Franciszka Salezego.
- Krąpiec, Mieczysław A. 1999. "Elementy filozofii poznania." In *Wprowadzenie do filozofii*, edited by Mieczysław A. Krąpiec, Stanisław Kamiński, Zofia J. Zdybicka, Andrzej Maryniarczyk and Piotr Jaroszyński, 335-396. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL.

- Paweł VI. 1972. Message of His Holiness Paul VI to Mr. Maurice F. Strong, Secretary-General of the Conference on the Environment, Vatican, 1 June 1972. Accessed by: 12.05.2021. [https://www.vatican.va/content/paulvi/en/messages/pontmessages/documents/hf\\_pvi\\_mess\\_19720605\\_conferenza-ambiente.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/paulvi/en/messages/pontmessages/documents/hf_pvi_mess_19720605_conferenza-ambiente.html).
- Ślipko, Tadeusz and Andrzej Zwoliński. 1999. *Rozdroża ekologii*. Kraków: WAM.
- Ślipko, Tadeusz. 1994. *Granice życia. Dylematy współczesnej bioetyki*. Kraków: WAM.
- Tyburski, Włodzimierz. 1993. *Pojednać się z Ziemią. W kręgu zagadnień humanizmu ekologicznego*. Toruń: IPIR.
- U Thant, Sithu. 1969. The problems of the Human Environment. UN Secretary-general Report of 26 May 1969. Accessed by: 12.05.2021. [http://web.archive.org/web/20080401001208/www.kwik.kapkap.pl/www/raport\\_u\\_thanta.html](http://web.archive.org/web/20080401001208/www.kwik.kapkap.pl/www/raport_u_thanta.html).
- Wróblewski, Zbigniew. 2010. *Natura i cele. Dyskusja argumentu teologicznego na rzecz ochrony przyrody*. Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL.
- Catholic climate movement. Accessed by: 13.05.2021. <https://catholicclimatemovement.global/pl/our-story-pl/>.
- John Paul II. 1987. *Sollicitudo rei socialis*. Accessed by: 8.04.2021. [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/pl/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_30121987\\_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/pl/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html).
- John Paul II. 1991. *Centesimus annus*. Accessed by: 4.04.2021. [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/pl/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_01051991\\_centesimus-annus.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/pl/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus.html).
- Laudato si caritas. Accessed by: 13.05.2021 <https://laudatosi.caritas.pl/projekt-laudato-si/>.





REV. GRZEGORZ KUDLAK

University of Warsaw

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9996-7259> \* [grzegorz.kudlak@uw.edu.pl](mailto:grzegorz.kudlak@uw.edu.pl)

Received: 30 Nov 2022; Reviewed: 19 Dec 2022; Accepted: 30 Dec 2022

## AXIOTHERAPY OF NON-ACCOUNTABLE PERPETRATORS OF CRIMINAL ACTS

### Abstract

Axiotherapy is an original project built on value-based therapy carried out in a forensic psychiatry ward. It is addressed to persons who committed a criminal act and were deemed by the court to be non-accountable or of limited accountability at the time of the crime. As a result, they were referred for treatment as part of the imposed preventive measures. Patients treated at the forensic psychiatry ward are most often perpetrators of violent crimes. While suffering from various mental disorders, they also exhibit impulsive behaviour leading to criminal acts. Such behaviour has far-reaching consequences for both the patient and the general public. Mental disorders of forensic psychiatry patients, the course of the disease, the degree of aggression and associated circumstances (such as addiction, sexual preferences disorders, and personality disorders) indicate a crisis in the sphere of values, which could be one of the factors leading to the serious crime. Working with a value system that determines a person's behaviour means working on a system that motivates and activates them and can change over time. Axiotherapy is intended to help patients to work out their value system and to identify their transcendentals, as appropriate.

**Keywords:** values, non-accountability, detention, axiotherapy

### AKSJOTERAPIA NIEPOCZYTALNYCH SPRAWCÓW CZYNÓW ZABRONIONYCH

### Abstrakt

Aksjoterapia jest autorskim projektem opartej na wartościach terapii, który jest realizowany na oddziale psychiatrii sądowej, gdzie przebywają osoby, które w przeszłości popełniły czyn zabroniony i zostały uznane przez sąd za niepoczytalne lub ich poczytalność w czasie czynu była ograniczona i w ramach realizacji środka zabezpieczającego zostały skierowane na leczenie. Pacjenci leczeni na oddziale psychiatrii sądowej najczęściej są sprawcami agresywnych czynów zabronionych. Osoby te, chorując na różnego rodzaju zaburzenia psychiczne, przejawiają także zachowania impulsywne, które w tym przypadku zakończyły się popełnieniem czynu zabronionego. Takie zachowania mają daleko idące konsekwencje zarówno dla samego pacjenta, jak i ogółu społeczeństwa. Zaburzenia psychiczne pacjentów oddziałów psychiatrii sądowej, ich przebieg, stopień agresji i towarzyszące

okoliczności (np. uzależnienia, zaburzenia preferencji seksualnych, zaburzenia osobowości) wskazują na kryzys w sferze wartości, który może być jednym z czynników, który doprowadził do popełnienia ciężkiego czynu zabronionego. Praca z systemem wartości determinującym indywidualne postępowanie danej osoby jest jednocześnie pracą nad systemem, który motywuje, aktywizuje i może się zmieniać. Aksjoterapia ma prowadzić pacjentów do przepracowania systemu wartości i określenia właściwie swoich transcendentaliów.

**Słowa kluczowe:** wartości, niepoczytalność, detencja, aksjoterapia

## INTRODUCTION

Psychology witnesses a marked tendency to reference values when building the concept of a human person. A particular role is played by psychology and psychotherapy trends called existentialism or humanism. These approaches serve as a basis for a direct conclusion that since values are essential for people and psychology is intended to help people, then psychology should help people practice values (Mellibruda 2021).

Value-oriented therapy has been scientifically justified (Marchewka 2021; Frankl 1998; 2021; Schwartz 1992; Kirchbach 2003; Längle 2003). When offered to patients in the forensic psychiatry ward, it serves a purpose, particularly in the context of the assumption that every human experience involves cognitive contact with the sphere of values. It is called a personal system of values, and it is “responsible for setting long-term goals, making choices, preference for socially acceptable behaviours and change of thinking and the manner of operating.” (Niewiadomska and Chwaszcz 2010, 67).

A value judgement process (evaluation, selection and execution) may face specific difficulties or disturbances. Most often, they result from an individual hierarchy of values not being shaped and stabilised enough to serve as a set of evaluation and selection criteria (Opozda-Suder and Ostafińska-Molik 2020, 118). Therefore, the individual’s choices may not align with the preferred values; they will not give a sense of meaning or contribute to one’s life.

Looking at the problems of detention patients from the perspective of their value system, determined by their attitudes and behaviour, is a pioneering initiative. It is related to the assumption of M. Rokeach that values are more important than attitudes. They are more dynamic, have strong motivational, cognitive, emotional and behavioural components, and are considered social behaviour determinants (Rokeach 1968, 157).

Incorporating the value judgement when treating a detention patient aligns with the desire to seek new solutions and therapeutic effects for this group of people. This idea was proposed as part of the COST Action IS1302 project (Sampson et al. 2016), which aimed to analyse and compare research on the effectiveness of treatment methods and to develop standards of forensic and psychiatric care in Europe. Experience from European countries such as Italy, the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, Poland, and Belgium, which jointly implemented the EU-VIORMED



project (DeGirolamo et al. 2019), show the need to address issues comprehensively, identify and prevent aggression in populations suffering from mental disorders and care for people with aggressive behaviour.

## 1. NON-ACCOUNTABILITY IN POLISH LAW

In all modern legal systems, the issue of criminal liability and assistance to people affected by mental disorders is standardised. Criminal liability is related to the principle of guilt. Under the current Polish criminal law, the principle of guilt is expressed in Article 1 of the Criminal Code, which states that the perpetrator does not commit an offence if no guilt can be attributed to them at the time of the offence. This ability to attribute guilt is based on two premises: maturity, i.e. the degree of psychophysical development, and accountability (Supreme Court Judgement of 4 November 2002). Guilt in Polish law is considered from the point of view of psychological theory and the definition of the normative theory of guilt. Guilt is defined as the defectiveness of the decision-making process when it is possible to make a decision compliant with the requirements of the legal standard (Bojarski 2020, 211).

Under the legal doctrine, the decision is expressed as an act defined as the perpetrator's behaviour closely linked to internal control processes (Makowski 1932, 21-22; Marcinkiewicz 2011, 27-28). Therefore, the legal effects of certain human acts depend, among other things, on the perpetrator's mental state at the time of committing the act (Heitzman and Markiewicz 2012, 46). A non-accountable individual, despite being the perpetrator, does not commit the crime because they are not culpable. In turn, the perpetrator with limited accountability may be subject to exceptional relief. Determining the extent of accountability of an individual committing a criminal act is essential either for the liability or the penalty (Heitzman and Markiewicz 2012, 1).

The Polish Criminal Code does not define accountability. The principle is that an adult person has the ability to act according to legal standards, has the ability to recognise what they are doing and is free to guide one's conduct (Żywucka-Kozłowska 2021, 572). This means that the standard conditions are not defined, only those that raise legitimate concerns. In practice, accountability is only examined if there are doubts about the perpetrator's mental health. To determine the degree of accountability, the court is assisted by experts in the field of psychiatry, and sometimes also psychology (Heitzman and Markiewicz 2012, 1).

The definition of non-accountability is provided in Article 31 §1 of the Polish Criminal Code. The article adopts a mixed method of defining accountability (psychiatric and psychological). The reasons for non-accountability are mental illness, mental impairment or other mental distress (biological and psychiatric). The occurrence of one of the above may exclude the possibility to recognise the significance of the act or to direct one's conduct (psychological reason), which is a consequence of non-accountability. Furthermore, time is an important

factor for excluding guilt in the context of non-accountability because only non-accountability at the time of the crime results in the exclusion of guilt.

In the case of limited accountability, the court may apply exceptional leniency (Article 31 §2 of the Criminal Code).

## 2. STAY IN A PSYCHIATRIC INSTITUTION AS A FORM OF PREVENTIVE MEASURE

A consequence of the legal and penal reaction to acts committed by the non-accountable perpetrator is the possibility of applying a preventive measure referred to in Article 94 of the Criminal Code. The legislator refused to punish persons who committed a crime while in a state that excludes the possibility of recognising the importance of the act or directing one's conduct. It would be pointless to penalise such persons or apply a punitive measure since such sanctions would not be able to fulfil their functions properly. Moreover, such persons must be isolated from the rest of the population to protect the community from otherwise non-accountable and unjustifiable behaviour. They also require specialised treatment (Golonka 2013, 54).

Preventive measures are not a penalty. They are applied to perpetrators who cannot be punished (since they are non-accountable, they are not guilty), to those who can reasonably be expected to commit offences again despite being punished, or, ultimately, to persons who cannot be punished sufficiently strictly because of the extent of guilt. Still, there is a need for isolation or prevention measures (Print No. 2393).

The catalogue of protective measures is regulated in Article 93a §1 of the Criminal Code. Preventive measures include electronic control of the place of stay (electronic surveillance), therapy, addiction therapy, and stay in a psychiatric institution. In addition, under Article 93a §2 of the Criminal Code, the sanctions referred to in Article 39(2-3) can be imposed as a preventive measure. They include disqualification from a specific work role, the exercise of particular professions or pursuing specific economic activities; disqualification from activities involving raising, treating and educating minors; a prohibition of being in specific communities and locations, a prohibition on contacting certain persons or on leaving a specific place of residence without the court's consent; a prohibition to participate in a mass event; a prohibition on entering gambling centres and participating in gambling games; an order to leave premises occupied jointly with the victim; and a disqualification from driving.

A stay at a psychiatric institution is the most acute preventive measure because it involves deprivation of liberty. Therefore, the court decides on psychiatric treatment in isolation conditions where this is provided for in the law (Article 93b §5 of the Criminal Code). Importantly, it is not necessary to obtain their consent to place the perpetrator in a psychiatric institution.

The placement of a non-accountable perpetrator in a facility requires the court to determine if the perpetrator has committed a prohibited act of serious

social harm and if there is a high likelihood of recidivism. This is linked to three key legal principles: necessity, subsidiarity and proportionality. Necessity relates to the fact that the court may decide on a preventive measure in the form of a stay in a psychiatric institution when it is necessary to prevent the perpetrator from committing a severe social offence (Article 93b §1 of the Criminal Code). The stay in a psychiatric institution should be cancelled when it is no longer necessary (Article 93b §2 of the Criminal Code). Subsidiarity implies that the court may decide on a preventive measure in the form of a stay in a psychiatric institution only if other legal measures under the Criminal Law or other laws prove insufficient to protect the legal order against the unwanted behaviour of the perpetrator (Article 93b §1 of the Criminal Code). The principle of proportionality consists in adjusting the nature and manner of the protective measure to the seriousness of the crime that the perpetrator may commit (Article 115 §2 of the Criminal Code) and the risk of recidivism, taking into account their progress in therapy or addiction treatment (Article 93b §3 of the Criminal Code).

The aim of placing the perpetrator in a psychiatric institution is to protect the public against their unwanted and illegal behaviour (Zduński 2015, 71) and to start therapy to eliminate the high risk of recidivism. The duration of stay in a psychiatric institution is not determined in advance (Article 93b §1 of the Criminal Code).

The stay of the non-accountable perpetrators in the forensic psychiatry ward serves a medical and protective function. Another important purpose of the non-accountable perpetrator's stay in a forensic ward is their social readaptation and preparation for returning to society and the proper fulfilment of social roles. The work with forensic patients is multi-level and multi-stage. In the forensic psychiatry wards, several specialists are employed, such as psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, occupational therapists, addiction therapists, social workers and other medical staff. This offers patients a wide range of pharmacological, therapeutic, socio-therapeutic, resocialisation and rehabilitation effects (Heitzman and Markiewicz 2017, 602).

### 3. VALUES AND THEIR IMPORTANCE IN THE TREATMENT OF DETENTION PATIENTS

Attitudes and values are considered to be determinants of social behaviour, whereas values determine attitudes and behaviour (Kościuch 1983, 84-85). Although individuals have more attitudes than values, values are the analytical tool used to describe and explain the similarities between individuals, groups, nations, and cultures (Rokeach 1968, 157-158). Under this definition, value is understood to be a lasting belief that a given course of conduct or the ultimate aim of life is individually and socially more attractive than other ways of behaviour and life objectives. Also, M. Kosewski mentions the regulatory impact of values on behaviour and indicates that internalised moral values guide human behaviour. According to him, values are the basis for self-evaluation. An activity considered valuable provides a subjective sense of well-being and positive self-esteem.

A discrepancy between behaviour and values is felt as a state of discomfort and serves as an incentive to reduce it (Kosewski 1985, 62).

Taking value-related measures against aggressive perpetrators treated in forensic psychiatry wards seems to be an important therapeutic direction for this group of patients. The illness, its course, the degree of aggression and the associated circumstances (such as addiction, sexual preference disorders, and personality disorders) indicate a crisis in their value and may constitute one of the factors leading to the criminal act. This has been verified with scientific research by M. Rokeach, for whom 'me' is the central element in the system of values and attitudes. It is an active factor determining the individual behaviour of a person. This system motivates and activates but can also change (Rokeach 1973, 18). Research shows that human function is permanently transformed only when values, not attitudes, change. These changes are more significant the more central values have been modified (Rokeach and McLellan 1972, 237). Value judgement covers all processes associated with the experience of values – cognitive, affective and motivational processes.

Mental illness and offence is also unique situation in which a reevaluation occurs, a value crisis is disclosed, and a change in the existing functioning occurs. Long-term research results indicate that many forensic patients suffer from decreased mental health and activity, which usually requires a new way of adapting. Many people with mental illness associate their mental impairment and ability to continue their social, family and professional activities with the effects of the illness. Patients complain about loneliness, misunderstanding, rejection and loss of hope for a better future (DeSisto et al. 1995, 331; Chuchra 2008, 548). This is linked to a reduction in overall life energy, which results in decreased confidence and can cause difficulties in mobilising oneself to act (Chuchra 2008, 552). Activity decline, emotional poverty, and inadequate, sometimes also illegal behaviour, are often considered by the public to be the consequences of patients' choices rather than the consequence of their illness. This makes it difficult for patients to connect with their family, loved ones or friends, especially due to their lack of understanding. However, the contact and support of the community (family and friends) is an important factor in the patient's recovery (Kaszyński 2013, 78). Therefore, a patient in the forensic psychiatry ward who has committed an aggressive criminal act – most often against somebody close to them – is particularly vulnerable. The family often turns away from the perpetrator, not because of the illness, but because of the acts committed. It is, therefore, important to distinguish an intentional violation of the law from an offence resulting from a mental illness. As noted by J. Szeluga, P. Pankiewicz and R. Miętiewicz – this makes it possible to see “the relationship between the interests of the individual and what is considered a social interest and to look at the centre of the environmental-body relationship” (2020, 14).

The analysis of the value system of patients, their problems with value judgement, and immaturity in this area are fundamental. They may cause difficulties in interpersonal relations and, more generally, in overall social functioning.

Psychological effects of immature value judgement include experiencing greater mental tension, increased anxiety, increased guilt, difficulties in achieving life's aspirations, reduced task performance, and decreased self-esteem (Oleś 2002, 64; Niewiadomska and Chwaszcz 2010, 67-71). In turn, empirical analyses show that people violating social principles show signs of a crisis in value judgement, i.e. difficulty in prioritising values, feeling of failure to comply with internal standards, the disintegration of the individual axiological system, and poor stability of value judgement (Simourd and Andrew 1994, 27-28).

Since the value judgement takes place at the level of thinking and concrete forms of behaviour, the consequence of one's values is actions taken in their spirit (Pankiewicz and Szeluga 2006, 210). Therefore, in a situation where the values and moral system of a mentally ill person is contrary to generally accepted social and legal standards, there may be a violation of law, including committing criminal acts, as has been the case for mentally ill detained patients.

The inclusion of values in therapeutic programs is also linked to the assumption that every human experience involves cognitive contact with the sphere of values, which is called a personal value system. It is responsible for "formulating long-term objectives, making choices, preferring socially acceptable behaviours, and modifying the way of thinking and acting. Internal standards should be understood as elements of personality which constitute a relatively stable organisation of beliefs regarding preferred behaviours or final states of existence, organised according to their relative importance. With this system, individual choices are targeted at objectives that, in their subjective perception, represent an important value, and thus give sense to the execution of those choices" (Niewiadomska and Chwaszcz 2010, 67).

Values that people recognise and practice form an essential element of personality development and influence their goals, decisions, and behaviours (Makin, Cooper and Cox 2000, 79; Robbins and Coulter 2005, 344; Shams, Akbari Sari and Yazdani 2016, 627). People with high axiological sensitivity are not only considered mature but also have a higher level of acceptance of the present. They show awareness of the value of being their real selves regardless of the situation (disease, difficulties, and crises), while values and informed choice support and guide their self-development (Manukyan, Golovey and Strizhitskaya 2015, 102).

#### 4. AXIOTHERAPY AS PROPOSED PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC MEASURES

Axiotherapy refers to therapeutic measures that address the sphere of values. This type of psychotherapeutic effect has been considered to include activities associated with the change. Scientific theories confirm that irrespective of the diversity of psychotherapy concepts and definitions, a change is a key concept both in research into the psychotherapy process and its effects (Aleksandrowicz 2000, 8; Czabała 2000, 239-240; Aleksandrowicz and Czabała 2012, 256; Prochaska and Norcross 2006, 5; Szcześniak 2011, 295-296; McAleavey and Castonguay 2015, 294; Moldovan and

Pintea, 2015, 300-301; Wampold 2015, 270). The change is understood as the gradual correction of disturbances and the introduction of such transformations that will help develop and attain health in general (Huflejt-Łukasik 2015, 442; Waszyńska, Bury and Filipiak 2016, 100). Psychotherapy is expected to change patients' experiences and behaviour. Its purpose can be rehabilitation, restructuration, development or integration of a patient's personality. Regardless of the psychotherapy techniques used, the consequence is to bring about changes in patient's behaviour as well as their cognitive and emotional processes (Kendall and Braswell 1982, 672; Moldovan and Pintea 2015, 300; Kramer et al. 2020, 617-618; Kendall 2021, 60). Other expected results include a change in the severity of disorder symptoms, and the disappearance or reduction of psychological symptoms, whereas some researchers also mention an improvement in social performance (Bomba 2010, 39).

Patients' stay in the forensic psychiatry ward is intended to lead to re-education, socialisation, reorganisation, restructuring, development, and personality integration (Szcześniak 2011, 295). This is in line with the general principles of psychotherapeutic measures and is the aim of actions taken for detention patients in the forensic psychiatry ward. They are intended to lead to changes in their various areas of life and health, ultimately minimising the risk of recidivism.

Axiotherapy is based on identifying the relationship between the value system and the source of incentive stress, the organisation of experience and the manner of controlling one's behaviour. Values are assumed to play a regulatory function, as demonstrated by the impact on a person's cognitive, emotional and behavioural system, i.e. the development of certain attitudes and behaviours (Rokeach 1973, 18).

The treatment begins with diagnosing the values and the other related personality dimensions. To accomplish this task, the group participants complete the Milton Rokeach Value Survey (RSV) in the Polish adaptation by Piotr Brzozowski. The Rokeach Value Survey is one of the simplest and most interesting methods of value testing. M. Rokeach recognises values in the personality theory, and the survey he developed measures values accepted by the group or the individual that relate to the most important life goals and how they are achieved. Therefore, Value Survey is an excellent tool to measure needs, attitudes and judgements in the context of certain behaviours (Brzozowski 1989, 3; Ciecuch 2013, 28-33). The personality description developed by M. Rokeach, through values and not attributes, has the advantage, according to the author, of allowing one to think about an individual in terms of both constancy and variability. Preferences are relatively constant but are subject to modifications, compatible with the circumplex and known development processes (Ciecuch 2013, 325) and may be re-valued. A trait is a permanent disposition, consistently characterising an individual over a long time, even a lifetime, despite the variability in behaviour (Buksik 2000, 192).

Once the participant's value hierarchy is established, the group sessions begin and take place once a week. They are developed based on the list of values in the Rokeach survey: terminal values (18 values: true friendship, mature love, self-respect,

happiness, inner harmony, equality, freedom, pleasure, social recognition, wisdom, salvation, family security, national security, a sense of accomplishment, a world of beauty, a world of peace, a comfortable life, an exciting life) and instrumental values (18 values: cheerfulness ambition, love, cleanliness, self-control, capability, courage, politeness, honesty, imagination, independence, intellect, broad-mindedness, logic, obedience, helpfulness, responsibility, forgiveness). Total – 36 values. According to psychological knowledge, sessions are planned using behavioural and cognitive techniques to strengthen the personal value orientation of perpetrators, as confirmed by research. The application of these techniques results in changes such as increased self-esteem, self-control, recognising the effects of one's conduct, postponing the gratification of objectives, responsibility for events in personal life, pro-social attitudes, decreased severity of the difficult circumstances experienced and the number of aggressive attacks on others (Niewiadomska and Chwaszcz 2010, 80).

The following forms of work are planned: lectures, psychoeducation, working in groups, films and reviews, discussions, multimedia presentations, visualisation (drawing, painting, other forms of visual expression), role play and specific techniques typical for behavioural and cognitive therapies (such as summary, Socratic dialogue, scaling, techniques of divided part, empathic confrontation, bibliotherapy and film therapy elements, behavioural experiments, expression of feelings in writing, role-playing, skills training, problem-solving techniques). These methods focus on transforming and reducing non-adaptive behaviour and, based on the learning-process patterns, allow the patient to acquire new behaviours (Bąbel 2011, 31; Sass-Stańczak and Czabała 2015, 10), which is the expected outcome for patients in the forensic psychiatry ward.

## CONCLUSION

Several European countries have recently researched factors affecting the length of patients' stay in forensic psychiatry wards (Conell et al. 2019; DeGirolamo et al. 2019). The researchers have highlighted the need to develop new cost-effective, successful methods of forensic psychiatry to promote evidence-based therapeutic strategies and improve the quality of patients' life. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that the lack of progress in therapy (linked to an increased risk of recidivism) is due, among other things, to insufficient rehabilitation and therapeutic programs, both in forensic psychiatric institutions and in community psychiatry. In particular, it has been pointed out that this is important for long-term patients in forensic psychiatry facilities who are socially withdrawn and ill-prepared to meet everyday needs in the modern world (Connell et al. 2019, 679).

The axiotherapy program at the Forensic Psychiatry Clinic of the Institute of Psychiatry and Neurology in Warsaw is an attempt to respond to this request. The program has been developed from the ground up and has been in operation for more than five years. It enabled participants to be observed in their day-to-

day tasks in the forensic psychiatry ward. It was noted that the participants made changes in areas such as: being involved in the recovery process (better cooperation with doctors and psychologists), being more active in other therapeutic activities, being more critical of the offence committed, being open to better collaboration with staff and other patients, being more engaged in contacts with the family. Patients disclosed that they were more open to forgiving themselves for their mistakes and less critical of themselves. They started working on themselves (they initiated health-promoting behaviours – physical exercise, changed diet, focus on intellectual development – language learning, reading literature). An important indicator of improving patients' health was that most received positive (psychiatric and psychological) health assessments after the end of the treatment. This led to the courts changing the degree of protection, and patients were transferred to forensic psychiatry hospitals with a basic degree of protection.

These preliminary observations encourage us to continue axiotherapy activities. In the future, it is planned to extend the efficacy studies with this form of psychotherapy to study the dimensions of personality such as self-esteem, sense of life, dealing with stress, effective coping with emerging difficulties and obstacles, and the level of illness acceptance.

#### REFERENCES:

- Aleksandrowicz, Jerzy W. 2000. „Psychoterapia a filozofia.” *Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria* 3(35): 5-17.
- Aleksandrowicz, Jerzy and Jan Czesław Czabała. 2012. “Podstawy psychoterapii.” In *Psychiatria*, vol. 3: *Metody leczenia, zagadnienia etyczne, prawne, publiczne, społeczne*, edited by Jacek Wciórka, Stanisław Pużyński and Janusz Rybakowski, 256-268. Wrocław: Elsevier Urban & Partner.
- Bąbel, Przemysław. 2011. “Terapia behawioralna zaburzeń rozwoju z perspektywy analizy zachowania.” *Psychologia rozwojowa* 3(16): 27-38.
- Bojarski, Marek. 2020. *Prawo karne materialne. Część ogólna i szczególna*. Warszawa: Wolters Kluwer.
- Bomba, Jacek. 2010. „Badania nad efektywnością psychoterapii w leczeniu zaburzeń psychicznych u dzieci i młodzieży.” *Psychoterapia* 3(154): 37-47.
- Brzozowski, Piotr. 1989. *Skala Wartości (SW). Polska adaptacja Value Survey M. Rokeacha. Podręcznik*. Warszawa: Polskie Towarzystwo Psychologiczne.
- Buksik, Dariusz. 2000. „Wybrane psychologiczne teorie cech osobowości.” *Seminarie. Poszukiwania naukowe* 16: 191-206.
- Chuchra, Maria. 2008. „Zmiany osobowości u chorych na schizofrenię paranoidalną w percepcji pacjentów i ich rodziców.” *Psychiatria Polska* 42(4): 547-559.
- Cieciuch, Jan. 2013. *Kształtowanie się systemu wartości od dzieciństwa do wczesnej dorosłości*. Warszawa: Liberi Libri.
- Connell, Catriona et al. 2019. “External factors influencing length of stay in foren-

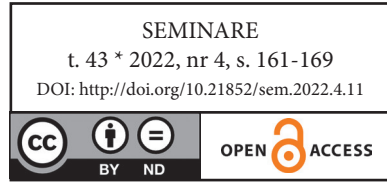


- sis services – a European evaluation.” *Psychiatria Polska* 53(3): 673-689. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.12740/PP/99299>.
- Czabała, Jan Czesław. 2006. *Czynniki leczące w psychoterapii*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- DeGirolamo, Giovanni et al. 2019. “European violence risk and mental disorders (EU-VIORMED): a multi-centre prospective cohort study protocol.” *BMC Psychiatry* 19 (Article number: 410). DOI: 10.1186/s12888-019-2379-x.
- DeSisto, Michael et al. 1995. “The Maine and Vermont three-decade studies of serious mental illness: I. Matched comparison of cross-sectional outcome.” *British Journal of Psychiatry* 167(3): 331-338. DOI: 10.1192/bjp.167.3.331.
- Druk nr 2393. 2015. *Rządowy projekt ustawy o zmianie ustawy – Kodeks karny oraz niektórych innych ustaw. Uzasadnienie, które weszło w życie jako Ustawa z dnia 20 lutego 2015 r. o zmianie ustawy – Kodeks karny oraz niektórych innych ustaw - Dz.U. 2015, poz. 396*.
- Frankl, Victor E. 1998. *Homo patiens*. Translated by Roman Czernecki and Józef Morawski. Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax.
- Frankl, Victor E. 2021. *Lekarz i dusza. Wprowadzenie do logoterapii i analizy egzystencjalnej*. Translated by Roman Skrzypczak. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Czarna Owca.
- Golonka, Anna. 2013. *Niepoczytalność i poczytalność ograniczona*. Warszawa: Wolters Kluwer.
- Heitzman, Janusz and Inga Markiewicz. 2017. „Finansowanie psychiatrii sądowej a jakość leczenia i zagrożenie bezpieczeństwa publicznego.” *Psychiatria Polska* 51(4): 599-608.
- Heitzman, Janusz and Inga Markiewicz. 2012. „Niepoczytalność – doktryna, praktyka, skuteczność, alternatywa.” *Psychiatria po dyplomie* 9(3): 1-6.
- Huflejt-Łukasik, Mirosława et al. 2015. „Zmiany w Ja w toku psychoterapii.” *Roczniki Psychologiczne* 3(18): 433-448.
- Kaszyński, Hubert. 2013. *Praca socjalna z osobami chorującymi psychicznie. Studium socjologiczne*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.
- Kendall, Philip and Lauren Braswell. 1982. “Cognitive-behavioral self-control therapy for children: A components analysis.” *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 50(5): 672-689. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-006X.50.5.672>.
- Kendall, Philip. 2021. *Zaburzenia okresu dzieciństwa i adolescencji Techniki terapeutyczne dla profesjonalistów i rodziców*. Translated by Joanna Kowalczevska. Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne.
- Kirchbach, Godela. 2003. „Ogólne wprowadzenie do Logoterapii i Analizy Egzystencjalnej.” *European Psychotherapy* 1(4): 33-46.
- Kosewski, Marek. 1985. *Ludzie w sytuacji pokusy i upokorzenia*. Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna.

- Kościuch, Jan. 1983. „Koncepcja wartości Milтона Rokeacha.” *Studia Philosophiae Christianae* 19(1): 83-96.
- Kramer, Ueli et al. 2020. “How Personality Disorders Change in Psychotherapy: a Concise Review of Process.” *Current Psychiatry Reports* 22(8): 41. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11920-020-01162-3>.
- Längle, Alfried. 2003. “Analiza egzystencjalna – poszukiwanie zgody na życie.” *Psychoterapia* 2(125): 33-46.
- Makin, Peter, Cary Cooper and Charles Cox. 2000. *Organizacje a kontrakt psychologiczny. Zarządzanie ludźmi w pracy*. Translated by Grażyna Kranas. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Makowski, Wincenty. 1932. *Kodeks karny. Komentarz. Część ogólna*. Warszawa: Drukarnia „Monolit”, nakładem Księgarni F. Hoesicka „Monolit”.
- Manukyan, Victoria, Larisa Golovey and Olga Strizhitskaya. 2015. “Psychological Society Formation of personality psychological maturity and adulthood crises.” *Psychology in Russia: State of the Art* 8(2): 99-112.
- Marchewka, Katarzyna. 2021. *Wartości w psychoterapii wrażliwej kulturowo. Perspektywa poznawczo-behawioralna*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Akademii Ignatianum w Krakowie.
- Marcinkiewicz, Paweł. 2011. „Motywacja sprawcy czynu zabronionego jako przesłanka odpowiedzialności karnej.” *Prokuratura i Prawo* 5: 24-38.
- McAleavey, Andrew A. and Louis G. Castonguay. 2015. “The process of change in psychotherapy: Common and unique factors.” In *Psychotherapy Research: Foundations, Process, and Outcome*, edited by Omar C.G. Gelo, Alfred Pritz and Bernd Rieken, 293-310. New York: Springer-Verlag Publishing. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-7091-1382-0\\_15](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-7091-1382-0_15).
- Mellibruda, Jerzy. 2021. *Psychologia i wartości*. Accessed by: 2.12.2022. <https://psychologia.edu.pl/component/content/article/115-teksty/1378-psychoterapia-i-wartosci.html>.
- Moldovan, Ramona and Sebastian Pinteau. 2015. “Mechanisms of change in psychotherapy: Methodological and statistical considerations.” *Cognition, Brain, Behavior. An Interdisciplinary Journal* 19(4): 299-311.
- Niewiadomska, Iwona and Joanna Chwaszcz. 2010. *Jak skutecznie zapobiegać karierze przestępczej*. Lublin: Drukarnia TEKST.
- Oleś, Piotr. 2002. „Z badań nad wartościami i wartościowaniem: niektóre kwestie metodologiczne.” *Roczniki Psychologiczne* 5: 53-75.
- Opozda-Suder, Sylwia and Barbara Ostafińska-Molik. 2020. „Aksjologiczny kontekst procesu dewiacji zachowania u dorastających.” *Lubelski Rocznik Pedagogiczny* 39(4): 117-137. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17951/lrp.2020.39.4.117-137>.
- Pankiewicz, Piotr and Janusz Szeluga. 2006. „Aksjoterapia: Psychoterapia aksjologiczna. Zarys metody.” *Gabinet Prywatny* 6/7: 57-61.
- Prochaska, James and John Norcross. 2006. *Systemy psychoterapeutyczne. Analiza transteoretyczna*. Translated by Maria Zakrzewska. Warszawa: Instytut Psychologii Zdrowia.

- Robbins, Stephen and Mary Coulter. 2005. *Management*. Prentice Hall: Pearson Education.
- Rokeach, Milton and David McLellan. 1972. "Feedback of information about the values and attitudes of self and alters as determinants of long-term cognitive and behavioral change." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 2: 236-256.
- Rokeach Milton. 1968. *Beliefs, Attitudes and Values*. San Francisco: Jose Bass Inc.
- Rokeach, Milton. 1973. *The nature of human values*. New York: The Free Press.
- Sampson, Stephanie et.al. 2016. "Long-Term Forensic Mental Health Services: An Exploratory Comparison of 18 European Countries. Project: COST Action IS1302 – Towards an EU Research Framework on Forensic Psychiatric Care." *International Journal of Forensic Mental Health* 15(4): 1-19. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14999013.2016.1221484>.
- Sass-Stańczak, Katarzyna and Jan Czesław Czabała. 2015. „Relacja terapeutyczna – co na nią wpływa i jak ona wpływa na proces psychoterapii?” *Psychoterapia* 1(172): 5-17.
- Schwartz, Shalom H. 1992. "Universals in the Content and Structure of Values: Theoretical Advances and Empirical Tests in 20 Countries." *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 25: 1-65.
- Shams, Lida, Ali Akbari Sari and Shahram Yazdani. 2016. „Values in Health Policy – A Concept Analysis.” *International Journal of Health Policy and Management* 5 (11): 623-630. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15171/ijhpm.2016.102>.
- Simourd, Linda and Donald A. Andrews. 1994. "Correlates of Delinquency: A Look at Gender Differences." *Forum on Corrections Research* 6(1): 26-31.
- Szcześniak, Ewa. 2011. „Proces psychoterapii indywidualnej i grupowej w leczeniu uzależnień.” *Studia Gdańskie. Wizje i Rzeczywistość* 8: 293-302.
- Szeluga, Janusz, Piotr Pankiewicz and Rafał Miętkiewicz. 2020. „Dylematy aksjologiczne w psychiatrii sądowej.” *Neuropsychiatria. Przegląd Kliniczny* 12(1-2): 12-17.
- Wampold, Bruce E. 2015. „How important are the common factors in psychotherapy? An update.” *World Psychiatry* 14(3): 270-7. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20238>.
- Waszyńska, Katarzyna, Przemysław Bury and Monika Filipiak. 2016. „Socjoterapia a psychoterapia – refleksje teoretyczne.” In *Współczesne konteksty psychoterapii i socjoterapii. Wybrane zagadnienia z teorii i praktyki*, edited by Katarzyna Waszyńska and Monika Filipiak, 93-116. Poznań: Wydawnictwo UAM.
- Wyrok Sądu Najwyższego z dnia 4 listopada 2002 r., syg. akt III KK 58/02. Lex nr 56846.
- Zduński, Igor. 2015. „Środki zabezpieczające w projekcie nowelizacji kodeksu karnego.” *Prokuratura i Prawo* 3: 51-72.
- Żywucka-Kozłowska, Elżbieta. 2021. „Gdzie kończy się norma, (...) a zaczyna patologia? Kilka uwag o niepoczytalności na gruncie wielomodelowego definiowania zdrowia psychicznego w świetle rozważań George’a E. Vaillanta.” *Studia Prawnoustrojowe* 52: 569-588. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31648/sp.6570>.





PRZEMYSŁAW EUGENIUSZ KANIOK

University of Opole

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0792-4260> \* [kaniokp@uni.opole.pl](mailto:kaniokp@uni.opole.pl)

Received: 01 Oct 2022; Reviewed: 27 Dec 2022; Accepted: 30 Dec 2022

## EDUCATIONAL CHANCES OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

### Abstract

The main aim of this paper is to present the current situation of children with disabilities in the Republic of Namibia, with special regard to their educational chances and influence of cultural beliefs on their lives. Namibia has a law, which entitles education for all its citizens. Despite numerous legislative acts which should have increased the educational chances of Namibian children with disabilities, their real situation is completely different and depends on various factors, including the infrastructure of the schools, teacher competencies, their attitudes towards students, the small number of special and integrated schools as well as an insufficient amount of money transferred for the education of the children. The paper discusses all of the above factors and provides practical implications, which would improve the situation of children with disabilities in Namibia.

**Keywords:** children, disability, educational chances, cultural beliefs

## SZANSE EDUKACYJNE DZIECI Z NIEPEŁNOSPRAWNOŚCIĄ W REPUBLICIE NAMIBII

### Abstrakt

Głównym celem artykułu jest przedstawienie aktualnej sytuacji dzieci z niepełnosprawnością w Republice Namibii, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem ich szans edukacyjnych oraz wpływu wierzeń kulturowych na ich życie. Republika Namibii posiada prawo, które uprawnia wszystkich jej obywateli do edukacji. Pomimo licznych aktów prawnych, które miały zwiększyć szanse edukacyjne namibijskich dzieci z niepełnosprawnością, ich rzeczywista sytuacja jest zupełnie inna i zależy od wielu czynników, w tym między innymi infrastruktury szkół, kompetencji nauczycieli, ich stosunku do uczniów, małej liczby szkół specjalnych i integracyjnych, a także niewystarczającej ilości pieniędzy, przekazywanych na kształcenie dzieci. W artykule omówiono wszystkie z powyższych czynników i zaprezentowano praktyczne implikacje, które poprawiłyby sytuację dzieci z niepełnosprawnością w Republice Namibii.

**Słowa kluczowe:** dzieci, niepełnosprawność, szanse edukacyjne, wierzenia kulturowe

“Education is (...) the foundation of a free  
and fulfilled life.

It is the right of all children and the  
obligation of all governments”

(Bellamy 1999, 19).

## INTRODUCTION

The inspiration for this paper comes from the author's visit to the Republic of Namibia, due to his research conducted in selected primary schools. The situation of children with disabilities on the African continent constitutes one of the most present, although complex issues, remaining in the focus of special pedagogues who work for international non-governmental organizations or specialized United Nations agencies in which a majority of activities are aimed at providing humanitarian help to developing countries in the field of children and youth education. The most meaningful argument, which can be quoted here to justify the necessity of turning the attention of the international community on this matter, is the statistical data of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which show that only 2 percent of children with disabilities living in developing countries can attend school (Laurin-Bowie 2005, 54). Many children with disabilities in Namibia do not have access to special education (Chitiyo et al. 2016, 5).

Keeping in mind the mentioned statistics, it was decided that the aim of this paper would be to present the situation of Namibian children with disabilities in the context of educational chances and African cultural beliefs, which determine their existence. Prior to presenting the selected aspects related to the situation of Namibian children with disabilities, it is worth mentioning the brief characteristics of the Republic of Namibia.

### 1. BRIEF CHARACTERISTICS OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

The Republic of Namibia is a country located by the Atlantic Ocean, in the southwestern part of Africa. Its area covers 512,200 square miles (*Encyklopedia popularna PWN* 1999, 549). The name of the country comes from the *Namib* desert running 1,245 miles along the west coast, which in one of the oldest languages of the local population means “giant” (Anderson & Bridge 1994, 330) or “a place where there is nothing” (Warner 2004, 93). The population of this country is estimated at over 2 million citizens (Ministry of Education 2008, 2). Based on statistical data obtained during the Namibian census in 2001, it was found that there were approximately 85,000 citizens with disabilities in the country, who accounted for 5 percent of the total population (*Disability Policy Audit* 2008, 25). In 2008, it was estimated that the number of students with various special educational needs in Namibia was 27,880 (Ministry of Education 2008, 18). However, students with disabilities were estimated

at barely 2,953 children (Ministry of Education 2008, 3). Recent statistics show that there are over 21,000 children with disabilities aged between 6 and 19 years, constituting 3.3 percent of the national population of that age, and 65 percent of these children are attending school. Comparing the above statistics with 79 percent of able-bodied children who attend school it can be implied that there are 4,600 more children with disabilities not attending school (UNICEF Namibia 2015, 29).

The capital of Namibia is the city of Windhoek, which hosts the most important national institutions as well as the seat of the University of Namibia, attended by over 30,000 students annually (University of Namibia 2019). Namibia's official languages are English and Afrikaans. Namibia is a country which became a German colony in 1884, officially called German South-West Africa (*Encyklopedia popularna PWN* 1999, 549). Over the next several decades, the country was under the jurisdiction of the Union of South Africa (now the Republic of South Africa), the League of Nations, then the United Nations Council, and finally in 1989, as a result of international negotiations, obtained independence. Before Namibia gained its sovereignty, for many years it had borrowed apartheid policy from the Republic of South Africa, which meant racial segregation and discrimination of indigenous African population by white descendants of Dutch settlers, called as Afrikaners (*The New Oxford Dictionary of English* 1998, 75; Okoth 2006, 155). The repercussions of apartheid politics still seem to be felt today by some black Namibian citizens.

Regarding the Namibian economy, one of its leading branches is mining, and more specifically, the mining of diamonds, uranium, lead and copper. Apart from the extraction of natural resources, other well-developed industrial areas in Namibia are the food industry, sheep and cattle breeding, fisheries and leather industry (*Encyklopedia popularna PWN* 1999, 549). Despite rich natural resources, and thus potential employment opportunities for unemployed citizens, the level of unemployment in the country is 37 percent (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2009, 12). An additional inconvenience in Namibians' everyday lives is the deficit of water resulting from the dry tropical climate prevailing in this country. All of the above information about Namibia will help the reader to understand the situation of Namibian children with disabilities.

## 2. EDUCATIONAL CHANCES OF NAMIBIAN CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Namibia annually spends more money on education than any other country on the African continent (United States Agency 2006) 19.1 percent of its budget, which is 7.7 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) (UNICEF 2018, 3). Additionally, after Namibia gained independence, in accordance with ratified international declarations and agreements (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, World Declaration on Education for All, Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All, Millennium Development Goals, Cali Commitment to

Equity and Inclusion in Education), a new law was passed to entitle all its citizens to education. This law is the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, proclaimed in 1990 in which, in Article 20, it was written: "All persons shall have the right to education" (Constitution of the Republic of Namibia 1998, 14). This provision coincides with Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, which states that: "Everyone has the right to education" (Universal Declaration of Human Rights 2015, 54). The right of Namibian children with disabilities to education is regulated by the National Policy on Disability, which states that "the Government shall ensure that children and youth with disabilities have the same right to education as non-disabled children. Education for all can only be achieved if all children have access to schooling" (*Government Gazette* 2004, 17). One of the assumptions of this policy is to base the education of students with disabilities "on the fundamental principles of inclusive education which demand that all children shall be taught together, whenever possible, regardless of individual differences or difficulties they may have" (*Government Gazette* 2004, 18). Common education of able-bodied children along with disabled children is implemented on the basis of the National Policy on Inclusive Education (*Government Gazette* 2004, 2), Sector Policy on Inclusive Education (2013), the Fifth National Development Plan, the Child Care and Protection Act (2015), Goal 4 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015) and a number of other documents that precisely regulate its course.

Despite numerous procedures and legal regulations aimed at increasing the educational chances of Namibian children with disabilities, their real situation within this range completely differs from the accepted standards. Therefore, the real image of learning opportunities for children with disabilities in Namibia consists of many different factors, including the infrastructure of the schools, teacher competencies, their attitudes towards students, the small number of special and integration schools, as well as an insufficient amount of money transferred for the education of these children.

Analyzing the situation of students with disabilities in the context of the infrastructure of Namibian educational institutions, it can be noted that schools located in the north of the country are definitely in worse condition than schools in the south. Most of the schools in the north do not have an infrastructure adapted to the needs of children with disabilities. They lack sanitary facilities, running water, telephone access and electricity. School buildings are often built in a traditional way, for instance with sticks and mud, covered with metal sheets or in the form of tents, in which practically classes are conducted outdoors. Especially during the wintertime or the rainy season, the construction of the classrooms imposes burdens for teachers and their students (Ministry of Education 2008, 4). An additional barrier for children with disabilities is that the distance between the school they attend and their home is often too far (Ministry of Education 2008, 3).

Another issue which has a significant impact on the educational chances of Namibian children with disabilities is the teachers' competencies and their attitudes towards them. One of the main reasons for the frequent lack of appropriate



teachers' competencies in work with Namibian children with disabilities is the fact that the idea of integrated education and disability-related topics are very rarely raised during studies preparing future educators. The rare reference to the issue of special education during teachers' education process comes from a belief in the necessity of educating children with disabilities by specially trained teachers. Thus, an insufficient level of knowledge within a range of integrated education prevents ordinary teachers from forming an opinion about students with disabilities, which would allow them to work with such children and break the stereotypical, often harmful approach of society towards children affected by disability. Another reason for the teachers' low level of competencies is their poor English language skills which are *sine qua non* condition to conducting classes with children. Apart from the teachers' poor language skills another factor which has an important impact on working with children with disabilities and non-disabled children is the lack of teachers' sufficient motivation, which results from their poor housing conditions and unavailability of public transport (Ministry of Education 2008, 16).

In addition to the above restrictions on universal access for children and youth with disabilities to integrated and special schools another obstacle to their education is the small number of such facilities across the country. According to statistical data from 2007, out of 1,661 schools in Namibia, only 9 of them were special schools for students with disabilities (Ministry of Education 2008, 3). In addition, only a few integrated schools and special classes operate mainly in the south of Namibia. The number of special and integrated schools in this country does not meet the demands for such facilities at all. Despite the growing number of mainstream schools, which increased up to 1,884 in 2018 (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture 2018, 1), there are still 9 special schools „which cater for only 3.020 of children with disabilities” (UNICEF 2017, 8).

Among all the reasons why educational chances for children with disabilities are still relatively small, the most frequently outlined argument is the lack of sufficient financial means to implement existing legal provisions that directly refer to the idea of integrated and special education in Namibia.

### 3. CULTURAL BELIEFS AND THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

People's cultural beliefs are an indispensable element of most cultures. According to one of the definitions of cultural beliefs they are defined as “the ideas and thoughts common to several individuals that govern interaction – between these people, and between them, their gods, and other groups – and differ from knowledge in that they are not empirically discovered or analytically proved” (Greif 1994, 915). For most of the modern societies of the African continent, cultural beliefs are still very important. This rule affects also the Namibian society, which is still influenced by cultural beliefs, despite the ruling laws passed to ensure equality to all its citizens, including those with

disabilities. The two most important implications that stem from Namibian society's cultural beliefs include looking for supernatural causes that might be a reason for a child's disability and their negative attitude towards them. The negative attitude towards people with disabilities that has been perpetuated for centuries is now gradually transforming and is the best evidence for the growing number of people, including parents of children with disabilities, who express their approval and support for their full integration with the rest of society. Due to the relatively recent research conducted by Cynthia Haihambo from the University of Namibia and Elizabeth Lightfoot from the University of Minnesota, it was possible to distinguish eight myths that Namibians associate with the occurrence of a child's disability in the family (Haihambo & Lightfoot 2010). The first myth is the belief that a child's disability is the result of witchcraft. There are two theories related to this belief. As the authors of the research claim: "The first theory is that a jealous rival bewitched the family that bears a child with a disability" (Haihambo & Lightfoot 2010, 80). Further, they state: "The second theory is that the family that bears a child who is born with a disability practiced witchcraft and failed to fulfill all the requirements of the witchdoctor" (Haihambo & Lightfoot 2010, 80). The second belief is that a child's disability is God's punishment for its' own or the parents' sins. The third myth is related to the statement that the disability of a child is the result of an ancestor's curse or a bad omen. The fourth belief, which is in some contradiction with the other myths, is that a child's disability is a gift from God. The fifth myth includes an assumption that the disability of a child was caused by the mother assigning the child's conception to a man who is not the biological father. The sixth belief is associated with the conviction that a child's disability is the consequence of blaming its' black mother for having intercourse with a white man or ghost. The seventh myth is that the child's disability was caused by the mother having sex with a man other than the father of the child in the presence of the child or while still breastfeeding. The last, eighth belief contains activities undertaken by the mother during conception or pregnancy that led to disability. These activities include the consumption of certain types of food products by a pregnant woman that may cause the disability of a child. An example is eating a large amount of fish by a mother which may be the cause of the child's future hyperactivity. On the other hand, it is supposed that consuming hot spices by a woman may lead to blindness of her child (Haihambo & Lightfoot 2010, 82). One of the most absurd Namibian myths is the belief that an individual can be infected with a disability or that it is the parents' punishment for not attending temple (Haihambo & Lightfoot 2010, 78).

Apart from the above myths there also can be distinguished beliefs which become a direct reason for causing harm to a child. An example of such belief would be a situation where twins of the same sex are born and their parents are willing to kill one of them to protect the rest of the family from death or other misfortune. Another example relates to children suffering from albinism, commonly known as albinos. Part of the Namibian society is convinced of the need to kill such children in order to avoid a curse (Haihambo & Lightfoot 2010, 77). In the face of numerous

superstitions, especially Namibian fathers cannot withstand the pressure caused by a child's disability so they decide to leave their families. They justify their decision to leave by saying that their family never had in the past a child with a disability.

#### SUMMARY

Summarizing this brief description of educational chances of children with disabilities in the Republic of Namibia it should be stressed that this paper does not exhaust the issue but it constitutes an attempt to present conditions in which they live and learn. Particular attention has been paid to two aspects of the living conditions of children with disabilities, that are educational chances and cultural beliefs. Based on the information presented in this paper, it can be concluded that the situation of Namibian children with disabilities is very difficult regarding their access to education and social attitudes towards them. Using the information presented in this article, a few practical implications can be made to improve their living conditions. First of all, the key to fighting the social exclusion of Namibian children with disabilities is education of the whole society, which should start in kindergartens. It is only in this way that people's attitudes towards children with disabilities will change. Secondly, the quality of education of future teachers should be improved, with particular emphasis on improving their language skills. Thirdly, the number of integration schools should be increased, especially in the north of Namibia. Special support should be given to non-governmental organizations dealing with the early diagnosis of children with disabilities. Fourthly, harmful attitudes towards individuals with disabilities, associated with African cultural beliefs should be fought in social campaigns. During the implementation of the above recommendations, it should be remembered that all initiatives related to combating the social exclusion of individuals with disabilities, the dignity and rights of all involved people must be respected.

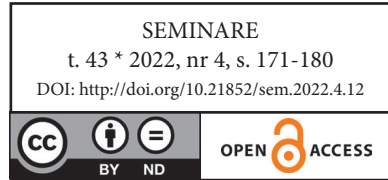
#### REFERENCES:

- Anderson, David S. and David M. Bridge. 1994. *Focus on Africa: Wildlife, conservation, and man*. Santa Barbara: Bridgewood Productions.
- Bellamy, Carol. 1999. *The state of the world's children 1999 education*. New York: United Nations Children's Fund.
- Cali Commitment to Equity and Inclusion in Education*. 2019. Cali: UNESCO. Accessed by: 21.03.2022. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000370910>.
- Chitiyo, Morgan Hughes et al. 2016. "An assessment of special education professional development needs in Namibia." *Człowiek – Niepełnosprawność – Społeczeństwo* 3(33): 5-18.
- Constitution of the Republic of Namibia*. 1998. Accessed by: 21.03.2022. [https://www.gov.na/documents/10181/14134/Namibia\\_Constitution.pdf/37b70b76-c15c-45d4-9095-b25d8b8aa0fb](https://www.gov.na/documents/10181/14134/Namibia_Constitution.pdf/37b70b76-c15c-45d4-9095-b25d8b8aa0fb).

- Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All*. 2000. Dakar: UNESCO. Accessed by: 21.03.2022. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000121147>.
- Disability Policy Audit in Namibia, Swaziland, Malawi and Mozambique. Final Report*. 2008. London: Leonard Cheshire Disability, Inclusive Development Centre University College London. Accessed by: 21.02.2022. <https://www.ilo.org/surveyLib/index.php/catalog/940/download/6338>.
- Encyklopedia popularna PWN*, edited by Dariusz Kalisiewicz. 1999. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Goal 4 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals*. 2015. Accessed by: 21.03.2022. <https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/sdg-goal-4>.
- Government Gazette of the Republic of Namibia. Promulgation of National Disability Council Act (Act no. 26 of 2004). No. 3360*. 2004. Accessed by: 21.03.2022. <https://www.lac.org.na/laws/2004/3360.pdf>.
- Greif, Avner. 1994. "Cultural Beliefs and the Organization of Society: A Historical and Theoretical Reflection on Collectivist and Individualist Societies." *Journal of Political Economy* 102(5): 912-950.
- Haihambo, Cynthy and Elizabeth Lightfoot. 2010. "Cultural beliefs regarding people with disabilities in Namibia: Implications for the inclusion of people with disabilities." *International Journal of Special Education* 3: 76-87.
- International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. 2009. *Namibia. Country Brief*. Washington: The World Bank. Accessed by: 21.02.2022. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/2630/485960PUB0Nami101Official0Use0Only1.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.
- Laurin-Bowie, Connie. 2005. "Poverty, disability and social exclusion: New strategies for achieving inclusive development." *Behinderung und Dritte Welt. Journal for Disability and International Development* 2: 51-56.
- Millennium Development Goals*. 2018. Geneva: WHO. Accessed by: 21.02.2022. [https://www.who.int/topics/millennium\\_development\\_goals/about/en/](https://www.who.int/topics/millennium_development_goals/about/en/).
- Ministry of Education, Art and Culture. 2018. *Namibia fifteenth school day report 2018*. Windhoek: Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. Accessed by: 21.02.2022. <https://www.scribd.com/document/447799506/763-Fifteenth-School-Day-Report-2018-web-quality>.
- Ministry of Education. 2008. *The Development of Education. National Report of Namibia (48<sup>th</sup> Session of International Conference on Education „Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future”, November 25-28, 2008)*. Accessed by: 21.02.2022. [http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/archive/National\\_Reports/ICE\\_2008/namibia\\_NR08.pdf](http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fileadmin/user_upload/archive/National_Reports/ICE_2008/namibia_NR08.pdf).
- Okoth, Assa. 2006. *A history of Africa: Volume 2, 1915-1995*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.
- Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education*. 1994. Salamanca: UNESCO. Accessed by: 03.06.2022. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000098427>.

- Sector Policy on Inclusive Education*. 2013. Windhoek: Ministry of Education. Accessed by: 03.06.2022. [https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/namibia\\_sector\\_policy\\_on\\_inclusive\\_education.pdf](https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/namibia_sector_policy_on_inclusive_education.pdf).
- The Fifth National Development Plan, the Child Care and Protection Act. Act No. 3 of 2015*. 2015. Accessed by: 03.06.2022. <https://www.gov.na/documents/10181/14226/NDP+5/5a0620ab-4f8f-4606-a449-ea0c810898cc?version=1.0>.
- The New Oxford Dictionary of English*, edited by Judy Pearsall. 1998. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- UNICEF Namibia. 2015. *School drop-out and out-of-school children in Namibia: A national review*. Windhoek: UNICEF Namibia. Accessed by: 03.06.2022. [http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/rws\\_windhoek2016\\_national-experience-sharing-on-oosci\\_namibia.pdf](http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/rws_windhoek2016_national-experience-sharing-on-oosci_namibia.pdf).
- UNICEF. 2017. *2016/2017 Budget. Children and the Namibian budget: Basic education*. Windhoek: UNICEF. Accessed by: 03.06.2022. <https://www.unicef.org/esa/media/991/file/UNICEF-Namibia-2017-Education-Budget-Brief.pdf>.
- UNICEF. 2018. *2017/2018 Budget. Children and the Namibian budget: Basic education*. Windhoek: UNICEF. Accessed by: 03.06.2022. <https://www.unicef.org/esa/media/991/file/UNICEF-Namibia-2017-Education-Budget-Brief.pdf>.
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID). 2006. *Strategic objectives: Quality primary education*.
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. 2015. United Nations. Accessed by: 03.06.2022. [https://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr\\_booklet\\_en\\_web.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/udhrbook/pdf/udhr_booklet_en_web.pdf).
- University of Namibia. 2019. *Overview*. Accessed by: 03.06.2022. <http://www.unam.edu.na/about-unam>.
- Warner, Thomas T. 2004. *Desert meteorology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- World Declaration on Education for All*. 1990. Jomtien: UNESCO. Accessed by: 03.06.2022. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000127583>.





ZBIGNIEW KAZIMIERZ MIKOŁAJCZYK

Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3917-7033> \* [z.mikolajczyk@uksw.edu.pl](mailto:z.mikolajczyk@uksw.edu.pl)

Received: 15 Nov 2022; Reviewed: 16 Dec 2022; Accepted: 30 Dec 2022

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AS A PHENOMENON WHICH AFFECTS FAMILY SAFETY

### Abstract

Family security depends on many factors, e.g., economic, political and social. Negative social phenomena, including crime, have a significant impact on the sense of security. Crime is understood as the number of prohibited acts committed in a given area and in a given time unit. Among its various types, we distinguish crime related to the functioning of the family. This study shows the scale of domestic violence in our country in recent years. The analysis concerns numerical data on the “Blue Card” procedure collected in the police database.

**Keywords:** family studies, internal security, public order, crime, domestic violence

## PRZEMOC DOMOWA JAKO ZJAWISKO WYWIERAJĄCE WPŁYW NA BEZPIECZEŃSTWO RODZINY

### Abstrakt

Bezpieczeństwo rodziny zależy od wielu czynników, np. gospodarczych, politycznych, społecznych. Istotny wpływ na poczucie bezpieczeństwa wywierają negatywne zjawiska społeczne, do których zalicza się między innymi przestępczość. Jest ona rozumiana jako liczba czynów zabronionych, popełnionych na danym terenie w danej jednostce czasu. Wśród jej licznych rodzajów wyróżnia się przestępczość związaną z funkcjonowaniem rodziny. Niniejsze opracowanie ukazuje skalę zjawiska przemocy domowej w naszym kraju na przestrzeni ostatnich lat. Analizie poddano dane liczbowe dotyczące procedury „Niebieska Karta” gromadzone w policyjnych bazach danych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** studia nad rodziną, bezpieczeństwo wewnętrzne, porządek publiczny, przestępczość, przemoc domowa

## INTRODUCTION

The fast pace of economic growth implies various changes, transformations as well as threats. Some of them directly affect the functioning of the family as the basic social unit. Thus, they also influence the security of the state which, in turn, impacts the (sense of) security of the family.

The current geopolitical situation, including Russia's invasion of Ukraine, reveals subsequent areas of military threats. On the other hand, there are internal threats which include negative social phenomena. Because of their 'local' character, their influence on the sense of security of the family is the strongest. However, the situation within the family has an even greater impact on its functioning. Crime related to domestic violence is, therefore, one of the main threats to the family.

The aim of this paper is to show the scale of domestic violence in Poland from 2019 to 2021. The analysis concerns numerical data which were gathered by Prevention Office of the Police Headquarters [Biuro Prewencji Komendy Głównej Policji]. As source materials, I used reports on the implementation of 'the Blue Card' [Niebieska Karta] procedure by the police. Due to the limited scope of this study, I do not discuss the distribution of the phenomenon in individual voivodeships, which may be the subject of subsequent research. Using data processed by the police, I show one of the main threats to the family at present.

### 1. CRIME IN POLAND

Brunon Hołyst defines 'crime' as the number of forbidden acts committed in a given area in a given unit of time (Hołyst 2009, 95). Characteristic features of the phenomenon are its geographical distribution, structure and dynamics. As such, it is the subject of study of many fields, e.g. criminology, forensics, social and political science and national security (Bałandynowicz 1998, Hołyst 2007, Chrzanowski 2015, 33-46, Hołyst 2014a, Hołyst 2013, Hołyst 2009, Koral 2009, Mikołajczyk 2015, 133-142, Mikołajczyk 2014a, 259-273, Mikołajczyk 2014b, 240-246, Sienkiewicz-Małyjurek and Niecyporuk 2011). It is also the subject of research by family studies which have been recently established as a discipline. Figures presented in this paper refer to crimes detected and confirmed in Poland in recent years. 'Confirmed crime' should be understood as 'the totality of acts whose nature as criminal acts has been confirmed by preparatory proceedings.' (Hołyst 2009, 96). 'Detected crime' should be understood as the number of acts for which law enforcement agencies have been notified. Brunon Hołyst points out that 'at present, in criminological research on the social costs of crime, the feeling of insecurity, angst and fear of becoming a victim of a crime come to the fore' (Hołyst 2015, 427). The growing number of crimes of various characters may increase social angst. For example, risks on the road are generally considered to be one of the greatest threats in our society. The chart below shows the scale of crime in general in Poland in recent years.



Table no. 1. Crimes detected and confirmed in Poland in 2017-2021

Year	Detected crimes	Confirmed crimes
2021	738 358	820 846
2020	701 669	765 408
2019	760 402	796 557
2018	769 136	768 049
2017	714 837	753 963

My analysis on the basis of statistical data of the Police Headquarters.

The chart shows that the number of detected crimes has increased over the last five years. The difference between 2017 and 2021 is almost 24 000. The largest increase in criminal acts was between 2017 and 2018, whereas in 2020 there was a significant decrease. The upward tendency is explicit in the case of confirmed crimes: the difference between 2017 and 2021 is 66 883 acts, which means an 8,14% increase. It is hardly possible to determine the number of crimes committed about which we have no information. It is worth underlying that the number of detected crimes is not the same as the number of reported crimes. This is due to the fact that in some reported cases, preparatory proceedings were not instituted because due to the initial actions taken it was determined that the proceedings should be discontinued before initiation or, on the basis of the collected evidence, the initiation of proceedings was refused. The conditions for discontinuation of proceedings or refusal to initiate them are specified in detail by the legislator:

‘Proceedings are not initiated, and those initiated are discontinued when:

- 1) the act has not been committed or there is no data sufficient to justify the suspicion that it has been committed
- 2) the act does not have the features of a criminal offense, or the law provides that the perpetrator has not committed a crime
- 3) social harmfulness of the act is negligible
- 4) the law provides that the perpetrator is not liable to a penalty
- 5) the accused has died
- 6) the statute of limitations is in force
- 7) criminal proceedings regarding the same act by the same person have been validly terminated, or criminal proceedings previously instituted are pending
- 8) the perpetrator is not subject to the jurisdiction of the Polish criminal court
- 9) there is no complaint from the authorized person (plaintiff, prosecutor etc.)
- 10) lack of the required leave to prosecute or motion for prosecuting from the entitled person unless the law provides otherwise
- 11) there is a circumstance that precludes prosecution’

(The Code of Criminal Procedure Act [Ustawa Kodeks postępowania karnego] 1997, article 17).

As for the geographical distribution of crimes, the numerical differences are not significant. Moreover, there has been a downward trend over the last 10 years. General data also include crime related to road safety, which increases the number of detected and confirmed crimes.

## 2. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND FAMILY SAFETY

It is the crime related to domestic violence witnessed daily that has the greatest impact on the family's sense of security. Opinion polls reveal that what the Poles fear most is their safety on the road. Also, they are afraid of crimes such as: theft, burglary, fraud, robbery, property damage, economic crimes and those committed via the Internet. The respondents, for various reasons, do not point to domestic violence as a serious threat. However, domestic violence implies forbidden acts, and 'dark figures' of crime are here the highest. People tend to hide the fact that they are victims of domestic violence because it takes place at their homes. Moreover, the preparator is someone very close to the victim, so the latter tries to forgive him/her for their negative behaviour. Above all, the sufferer does not want to reveal it to third parties.

Table no. 2. The 'Blue Card' Procedure in 2019

1	The total number of the Blue Card forms completed	74313
a	The number of forms completed that initiated the procedure	61076
b	The number of forms completed due to subsequent cases of domestic violence in a given family while the previous procedure was pending	13237
2	The number of people suspected of being victims of domestic violence	88032
a	Women	65195
b	Men	10676
c	The underage	12161
3	The number of people suspected of using violence in the family	74910
a	Women	6448
b	Men	68148
c	The underage	314
4	The number of people suspected of using violence under the influence of alcohol	42583
a	Women	2126
b	Men	40435
c	The underage	22
5	The number of children placed in a foster family or a residential child care	309

Source: numerical data of the Police Headquarters.

*Formularz III/8 2019, Sprawozdanie z podjętych przez policję działań wobec przemyocy w rodzinie dotyczące procedury „Niebieskie Karty” (Form III/8 2019, Report on actions taken by the police against domestic violence regarding the 'Blue Cards' procedure).*

The numerical data collected by the police regarding the 'Blue Card' procedure most reliably illustrate the scope of domestic violence in Poland. In 2019, 74 313 cases of domestic violence were reported. It was a 1,59 % increase compared to 2018. This means that there are 211 cases of domestic violence per every 100 000 inhabitants of our country. Forms that initiate the Blue Card procedure were completed in 61076 cases which is 82,19 % of the total number of forms filled in by the police. Most of them (43 103) applied to urban areas. There were 88 032 identified victims of domestic violence. According to police data, in 2019, psychological violence was the most common form of domestic violence (81 000 cases which is a 7,21% increase when compared to the previous year). Most perpetrators acted under the influence of alcohol. In 2019 there were 42 583 intoxicated perpetrators identified (56,85 % of the total number of people suspected of using violence).

Table no. 3. The 'Blue Card' Procedure in 2020

1	The total number of the Blue Card forms completed	72601
a	The number of forms completed that initiated the procedure	59701
b	The number of forms completed due to subsequent cases of domestic violence in a given family while the previous procedure was pending	12900
2	The number of people suspected of being victims of domestic violence	85575
a	Women	62866
b	Men	10922
c	The underage	11787
3	The number of people suspected of using violence in the family	73228
a	Women	6677
b	Men	66198
c	The underage	353
4	The number of people suspected of using violence under the influence of alcohol	39798
a	Women	1986
b	Men	37781
c	The underage	31
5	The number of children placed in a foster family or a residential child care	288

Source: numerical data of the Police Headquarters.

*Formularz III/8 2020, Sprawozdanie z podjętych przez policję działań wobec przemocy w rodzinie dotyczące procedury „Niebieskie Karty” (Form III/8 2020, Report on actions taken by the police against domestic violence regarding the 'Blue Cards' procedure).*

In 2020, there was a 2,30 % decrease when compared to 2019 and a 2,25 % decrease when compared to 2018. We can, therefore, speak of a downward tendency. On average, there were 202 forms completed for every 100 000 inhabitants. The Police Headquarters state that 'In Poland, in 2020, the police filled in 59 701 forms thus initiating the Blue Card procedure. This is 82,23% of the total number of «Blue Card – A» forms completed by the police at that time. There was a decrease in the number of forms completed by the police that initiated the Blue Card Procedure (a decrease of 1 375 and 128 forms in 2019 and 2018 respectively) (...) The difference between the number of «Blue Card – A» forms completed by the police in urban vs. rural areas was 11 557 forms. In the statistical period under analysis, 42 079 forms of «Blue Card – A» were completed in urban areas and 30 522 in rural areas. In 2020, there was a decrease in domestic violence. 164 065 cases of various kinds of violence were recorded. When compared to 2019, it was a decrease of 2037 cases (the dynamics: 98,77%) and an increase of 4 768 cases when compared to 2018 (the dynamics: 103,00%). In 2020, psychological violence was the kind of domestic violence used most often. There were 81344 cases of psychological violence recorded (49,58% of the total number of cases of violence in the family). In 2020, 57 760 cases of physical violence were recorded which is a decrease of 1203 cases when compared to 2019 and an increase of 180 cases when compared to 2018. In 2020, there was a decrease in sexual violence and other kinds of violence when compared to 2019. In 2020, 1 163 sexual violence cases were recorded (a decrease of 75 cases, the dynamics: 93,94%) and 21 985 cases of violence of other kinds (a decrease of 1072 cases, the dynamics: 95,35%). In 2020, there were 85 575 people suspected of being affected by domestic violence. When compared to the numbers in 2019 and 2018 this means a decrease of 2,79% and 2,90% respectively (...) The majority of people suspected of using domestic violence were under the influence of alcohol (39 798 people, i.e. 54,35% of the total number of people suspected of using violence). In 2020, when compared to 2019 the number of people suspected of using domestic violence under the influence of alcohol dropped by 6,54%' (Prevention Office of the Police Headquarters 2020, 23-24). The police use isolation measures more and more often. In 2020, the police issued 255 orders to immediately leave the joint place of residence and its immediate surrounding, and orders to prohibit an individual from approaching the joint place of residence or its immediate surroundings. The orders were issued against people who posed a threat to the life or health of the victim of their violence (Police Act of 1990, article 15aa).

Table no. 4. The 'Blue Card' Procedure in 2021

1	The total number of the Blue Card forms completed	74250
a	The number of forms completed that initiated the procedure	53985
b	The number of forms completed due to subsequent cases of domestic violence in a given family while the previous procedure was pending	10265
2	The number of people suspected of being victims of domestic violence	75761
a	Women	55112
b	Men	9520
c	The underage	11129
3	The number of people suspected of using violence in the family	64846
a	Women	6173
b	Men	58349
c	The underage	324
4	The number of people suspected of using violence under the influence of alcohol	33622
a	Women	1831
b	Men	31769
c	The underage	22
5	The number of children placed in a foster family or a residential child care	345

Source: numerical data of the Police Headquarters.

*Formularz III/8 2021, Sprawozdanie z podjętych przez policję działań wobec przemocy w rodzinie dotyczące procedury „Niebieskie Karty” (Form III/8 2021, Report on actions taken by the police against domestic violence regarding the „Blue Cards” procedure.).*

The analysis of the figures for 2021 shows that there was still a downward tendency. The police officers filled in 64 250 forms related to the disclosure of circumstances that justified the implementation of the Blue Card procedure. The number of completed documents was down by 11,5% when compared to 2020 (8351 fewer cases). The average number of completed forms of the Blue Card for 100000 inhabitants dropped by 175. According to the Prevention Office of the Police Headquarters 'in 2021, the highest number of completed forms 'Blue Card – A' per 100000 inhabitants was in the following areas: Kielce (299 forms), Wrocław (265) and Białystok (258). The lowest number of completed forms was in the following police districts: małopolski (103), the capital city (104) and opolski (126).

This tendency was maintained since 2020. In 2021, in Poland, the police filled in 53985 forms that implement the Blue Card procedure (84,02% of the total number of the forms 'Blue Card – A' completed by the police). In 2020 and 2019, the numbers of the forms that implement the procedure were 59 701 and 61 076 respectively. In 2021 we see a decrease of 5716 and 7091 forms completed when compared to 2020 and 2019. The highest number of the forms were recorded in

the areas of Wrocław (5 873 forms), Poznań (5 263) and Katowice (5 110). When compared to 2019, in all these areas the number of cases dropped. The lowest number of forms that implement the 'Blue Card' procedure was in the following areas: Opole (956 forms, the dynamics: 90,53%), Gorzów Wlkp. (1 249, the dynamics: 84,91%) and Olsztyn (2 153, the dynamics: 76,46%)' (Prevention Office of the National Police Headquarters 2021, 6).

In 2021, similarly to the previous years, it was women who constituted the largest group of victims of domestic violence: 55 112 cases were recorded (72,74% of all the people affected by domestic violence). The measures of isolating perpetrators from the victims have become more effective. In 2021, there were 3 531 orders to immediately leave the joint place of residence or its immediate surrounding or orders prohibiting an individual from approaching the joint place of residence and its immediate surroundings. Among them, the first kind of orders (162) constituted 4,59% of the total number of isolations measures taken; while the second kind of orders (269) constituted 7,62% of their total number; 3100 orders of both kinds accounted for 87,79% of the total number of isolation measures taken.

The data under analysis show that psychological violence was the kind of domestic violence recorded most often: in 2021, as many as 70 611 cases accounted for 49,93 % of the total number of cases of violence registered.

## CONCLUSION

According to the Police Headquarters, 'effective and efficient prevention of criminogenic phenomena depends on the current study of existing threats. Our activity in this field helps us diagnose the current and future threats as well as assess the efficacy of the actions taken by the Police so far. Analysing the state of security and public order is the basic method that helps identify and eliminate threats in a given area. The results of the analysis are used while planning the dislocation of the police. In line with Regulation § 15 no. 768 of the Chief of Police of 14th August 2007 regarding forms and methods employed by the police officers on patrol duty and coordination of preventive activities (Official Journal of the Police [Dz. Urz. KGP] of 2018 r. item 108, as amended), the analysis should be based on the evaluation and monitoring of individual factors, in particular prevention of all kinds of behavior which can pose a threat to the safety of people, property, or can violate public order' (Prevention Office of the Police Headquarters KGP 2020, 1). My analysis supports the policy of the Prevention Office. Moreover, it emphasizes the need to engage other entities in the process of counteracting domestic violence. However, the police studies of the phenomenon do not show its upward or downward tendencies. They compare figures on an annual basis and to discern a tendency one needs to compare data from e.g. three years. Therefore, long-term analyses should be made. On the basis of the above data, I conclude that:

- Over the last 3 years, domestic violence in our country has decreased
- This kind of violence is strongly related to the problem of alcoholism
- Over half of the perpetrators were under the influence of alcohol while committing the crime
- After legal regulations have been changed, the police more and more often resort to isolation measures in the case of confirmed domestic violence
- Other entities which operate at the local level are also involved in the procedure of counteracting domestic violence.

Undoubtedly, domestic violence is one of the most serious social phenomena that negatively affect the functioning of the family. Ensuring the safety of the family is a process of interdisciplinary character and, as such, requires involving various entities and institutions at the level of government, local authorities as well as all citizens. Building social awareness and educating various social groups in this regard is crucial. Also, efficient and systemic transfer of information between services and authorities responsible for counteracting domestic violence. Public sector services also play an important part. This includes the police responsible for maintaining public safety and order. Its purpose is to prevent and fight negative social phenomena, including crime in the family.

In Poland, the development of research in the above area as well as the engagement of the academic community in the development of family studies is still insufficient. This also includes in-depth studies of various threats to family security, including domestic violence.

#### REFERENCES:

- Bałandynowicz, Andrzej. 1998. *Zapobieganie przestępczości*. Warszawa: Zakład Poligraficzny „Primum”.
- Biuro Prewencji Komendy Głównej Policji. *Informacja dotycząca realizacji przez Policję procedury „Niebieskie Karty” w 2019 r.*
- Biuro Prewencji Komendy Głównej Policji. *Informacja dotycząca realizacji przez Policję procedury „Niebieskie Karty” w 2020 r.*
- Biuro Prewencji Komendy Głównej Policji. *Informacja dotycząca realizacji przez Policję procedury „Niebieskie Karty” w 2021 r.*
- Chrzanowski, Wiesław. 2015. „Zapobieganie negatywnym zjawiskom społecznym w działaniach prewencyjnych Mazowieckiego Oddziału Żandarmerii Wojskowej w Warszawie.” *Zeszyt Naukowy Międzynarodowego Centrum Dialogu Międzykulturowego i Międzyreligijnego, Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego w Warszawie* 3: 33-46.
- Hołyst, Brunon. 2014a. *Bezpieczeństwo. Ogólne problemy badawcze*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Hołyst, Brunon. 2014b. *Bezpieczeństwo jednostki*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

- Hołyst, Brunon. 2015. *Bezpieczeństwo społeczeństwa*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Hołyst, Brunon. 2007. *Kryminalistyka*. Warszawa: LexisNexis.
- Hołyst, Brunon. 2009. *Kryminologia*. Warszawa: LexisNexis.
- Hołyst, Brunon. 2013. *Zagrożenia ład społeczny*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Koral, Jarosław. 2009. *Kulturowe aspekty polskiego bezrobocia*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego.
- Mikołajczyk, Zbigniew. 2014a. „Koncepcja Ruchomych Przestrzeni.” *Zeszyt Naukowy MCDMiM UKSW 2*: 240-246.
- Mikołajczyk, Zbigniew. 2014b. „Przestępczość jako konsekwencja braku pieniądza.” In *Być człowiekiem stąd*, edited by Artur Wysocki, 259-273. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kardynała Stefana Wyszyńskiego.
- Mikołajczyk, Zbigniew. 2015. „Zapobieganie patologii i przestępczości wśród nieletnich w oparciu o założenia Koncepcji Ruchomych Przestrzeni.” *Zeszyt Naukowy MCDMiM UKSW 3*: 133-142.
- Sienkiewicz-Małyjurek, Katarzyna, and Zygmunt Niczyporuk. 2011. *Bezpieczeństwo publiczne zarys problematyki*. Gliwice: Wydawnictwo Politechniki Śląskiej.
- Ustawa z dnia 6 czerwca 1997 r. *Kodeks postępowania karnego*. Dz. U. of 1997, no. 89, item 555, as amended.
- Ustawa z 6 kwietnia 1990 r. *o Policji*. D z. U. of 2021, items 1882, 2333, 2447, 2448, of 2022 items 655, 1115, 1488, 1855, as amended.
- Zarządzenie nr 768 Komendanta Głównego Policji z dnia 14 sierpnia 2007 r. *w sprawie form i metod wykonywania zadań przez policjantów pełniących służbę patrolową oraz koordynacji działań o charakterze prewencyjnym* (Dz. Urz. KGP z 2018 r. poz.108, z późn. zm.).



## REVIEWS

SEMINARE

t. 43 \* 2022, nr 4, s. 181-182

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.21852/sem.2022.4.13>

Ferenc Hörcher, *A Political Philosophy of Conservatism Prudence, Moderation and Tradition*, Great Britain 2020, pp. 210.

Conservatism as a political ideology, despite the fact that today it still finds its supporters, remains – especially considering the present state of Europe – on a margin connected with the market of political ideas. Unfortunately, most often it results from a misunderstanding or misunderstanding of the main ideas related to this current of philosophy, as well as a misunderstanding of the main political assumptions related to conservatism, be it evolutionary or traditional. A book by Ferenc Hörcher, who is a specialist in the philosophy of politics, comes out against this situation. He studied in Budapest, Oxford and Brussels-Leuven. He is professor of Philosophy at Pázmány Péter Catholic University and director of the Institute of Philosophy of the Hungarian Academy of Science. He regularly teaches at the Jagiellonian University (Kraków) and the Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca (Kolozsvár). He researched in Göttingen, Wassenaar, Cambridge, Edinburgh and at Notre Dame University.

In his reflection on conservatism in political terms, the author focuses mainly on the part related to the world of values, which, in Hörcher's opinion, constitute the core of thinking about man, the world and all activities, including political activity. A virtue which he discusses in depth on this very aspect is prudence. The narrative presented in this way makes the book undoubtedly original, because there are few researchers today who refer to traditional values and are able to update them in the light of contemporary problems and dilemmas, of which there are many in the world of politics.

The book is essentially divided into two parts. The first part (pp. 13-78) is devoted to the historical development of prudence in both the world of philosophy and the world of politics. The author shows the light and dark sides of how this virtue was approached by philosophers and politicians. It is valuable that the author of the book devotes space to reflection on prudence in Aristotle's philosophy. However, he does it in an innovative way, because using the already available studies, he presents his own position on the matter and tries to give meaning to this virtue in the present day. The second part of the book (pp. 79-161) is deeply practical, although the narrative is built on the basis of the theoretical connections between the virtue of prudence in conservatism and the world of politics. It must be emphasized at this point that the author is not uncritical about the problem of prudence. This is due to the fact that, first of all, it shows some limitations related to the implementation of this virtue both in the life of a specific person and in the life of a specific community, pointing to three basic problems: agency, time and knowledge.

However, the author of the book presents the most interesting and original approach to the subject in the subsections of the second part, that is: *The prudent individual's resources: Virtues and character*, *The prudent community's resources: Tradition and political culture* and *How to find the proper action in politics*. On the one hand, Hörcher shows that the strength of the virtues on which conservatism is based results from the character of a specific person, on the other hand, it shows that conservatism cannot be built in solitude. The strength of a community is built by the strength of the character of people who want to remain in a given community. This is what the author writes in the part concerning prudence exercised by man in the framework of virtues and character (in reference to Aristotle [the classical concept of virtues] and Alasdair MacIntyre [contemporary interpretation of the concept of virtues]): „In what follows, we take a look at two major factors that provide resources to help individuals arrive at the right decisions in politics. What is more, these factors play a major role in determining the relationship between the individual and the different types of groups of which she or he is a member, and more generally, the way individual agents and their communities

relate to each other” (p. 117). It is also difficult to disagree – against the background of contemporary political and ideological disputes – with the following thesis put forward by the author of the book: „Prudence, or this-worldly wisdom, reminds humans that perfection is not available in this world. A conservative political philosophy of prudence needs to give up perfectionism” (p. 148).

When assessing the formal side of the book, it is difficult to accuse any flaw. The structure of the book under review is clear, logical and transparent. The presentation is conducted in an academic manner, but also understandable to a reader who does not know the history of conservatism in depth. The book can therefore be valuable for both the expert on the subject and the layman. In terms of content, the book meets all the features of science. The author refers both to classical authors related to conservatism and looks for new interpretations of the problem. It must be admitted that the author has dealt with a difficult topic, because prudence as a political virtue does not constitute much (contemporary) interest in the market of ethical or political ideas. One clear drawback of the book is that the author avoids confrontation with other contemporary philosophical currents such as liberalism, libertarianism, and postmodernism. The book lacks references and comparisons as well as searching for answers to the question of how conservatism and virtue ethics compare with the dominant trends mentioned above. Such a reference could help the reader understand the importance of conservatism in the contemporary “struggle for man” in the context of the world of values.

It should be emphasized, however, that the book is a valuable contribution to the development of a conservative philosophy of politics and should be another source of inspiration for researchers of the part of philosophy that deals with practical action, i.e. politics.

Michał Stachurski

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2877-3895> \* [michal.stachurski@poczta.onet.pl](mailto:michal.stachurski@poczta.onet.pl)

## CONTENTS

Jerzy Gocko SDB, <i>Saint Francis de Sales (1567–1622): Bishop of Geneva, Doctor of the Church, Humanist. On the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Death of the Patron of the Francis de Sales Scientific Society</i> .....	1
---	---

### THEOLOGY

Rev. Andrzej Kuciński, <i>A Free Man in Search of the Truth About Himself. An Attempt at a Moral-Theological Actualization of Sophocles 'Oedipus the King'</i> .....	11
Rev. Jan Przybyłowski, <i>Ecclesiality and Human Socialization in the Aspect of Applied Theology</i> .....	27
Rev. Władysław Wyszowadzki, <i>The Church in the Face of the Challenges of the Post-Pandemic Era</i> ...	41
Piotr Walewski, <i>Racism in the Twentieth Century Light of Church Teaching. A Discussion of the Most Important Definitions and a New Interpretation of the Phenomenon</i> .....	59
Rev. Wojciech Mueller, <i>The Heroism of the Theological Virtues: Ffaith, Hope and Love in the Light of the Beatification Process of the Servant of God, Rev. Aleksander Woźny</i> .....	71
Rev. Michał Pierzchała, <i>The 'Virus' of Radical Individualism</i> .....	83
Rev. Tomasz Adamczyk, Rev. Michał Klementowicz, <i>The Homily in the Eyes of the Youth: The Problem of Symmetry. A Sociological and Textual Analysis</i> .....	99

### SOCIOLOGY AND PEDAGOGY

Rev. Andrzej Łuczyński SDB, Lidia Pietruszka, <i>Phonoholism as a Sign of 'Always on' Generation – Research Report</i> .....	115
Marcin Klimski, <i>Common-Sense Cognition in the Practice of Environmental Education of the Catholic Church</i> .....	135
Rev. Grzegorz Kudlak, <i>Axiotherapy of Non-Accountable Perpetrators of Criminal Acts</i> .....	147
Przemysław Eugeniusz Kaniok, <i>Educational Chances of Children with Disabilities in the Republic of Namibia</i> .....	161
Zbigniew Mikołajczyk, <i>Domestic Violence as a Phenomenon which Affects Family Safety</i> .....	171

### REVIEWS

F. Hörcher, <i>A Political Philosophy of Conservatism Prudence, Moderation and Tradition, Great Britain 2020 – reviewed by Michał Stachurski</i> .....	181
--	-----



## CONTENTS

Jerzy Gocko SDB, <i>Saint Francis de Sales (1567–1622): Bishop of Geneva, Doctor of the Church, Humanist. On the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Death of the Patron of the Francis de Sales Scientific Society</i> .....	1
---	---

### THEOLOGY

Rev. Andrzej Kuciński, <i>A Free Man in Search of the Truth About Himself. An Attempt at a Moral-Theological Actualization of Sophocles 'Oedipus the King'</i> .....	11
Rev. Jan Przybyłowski, <i>Ecclesiality and Human Socialization in the Aspect of Applied Theology</i> .....	27
Rev. Władysław Wyszowadzki, <i>The Church in the Face of the Challenges of the Post-Pandemic Era</i> ...	41
Piotr Walewski, <i>Racism in the Twentieth Century Light of Church Teaching. A Discussion of the Most Important Definitions and a New Interpretation of the Phenomenon</i> .....	59
Rev. Wojciech Mueller, <i>The Heroism of the Theological Virtues: Ffaith, Hope and Love in the Light of the Beatification Process of the Servant of God, Rev. Aleksander Woźny</i> .....	71
Rev. Michał Pierzchała, <i>The 'Virus' of Radical Individualism</i> .....	83
Rev. Tomasz Adamczyk, Rev. Michał Klementowicz, <i>The Homily in the Eyes of the Youth: The Problem of Symmetry. A Sociological and Textual Analysis</i> .....	99

### SOCIOLOGY AND PEDAGOGY

Rev. Andrzej Łuczyński SDB, Lidia Pietruszka, <i>Phonoholism as a Sign of 'Always on' Generation – Research Report</i> .....	115
Marcin Klimski, <i>Common-Sense Cognition in the Practice of Environmental Education of the Catholic Church</i> .....	135
Rev. Grzegorz Kudlak, <i>Axiotherapy of Non-Accountable Perpetrators of Criminal Acts</i> .....	147
Przemysław Eugeniusz Kaniok, <i>Educational Chances of Children with Disabilities in the Republic of Namibia</i> .....	161
Zbigniew Mikołajczyk, <i>Domestic Violence as a Phenomenon which Affects Family Safety</i> .....	171

### REVIEWS

F. Hörcher, <i>A Political Philosophy of Conservatism Prudence, Moderation and Tradition, Great Britain 2020 – reviewed by Michał Stachurski</i> .....	181
--	-----

